

# **Horizon**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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**HOW FIRM IS THE ATLANTIC HANDCLASP?**

*by* BEATRICE LEEDS

**THE PUPIL**

*by* ROLLO WOOLLEY

**POETRY IN 1941**

*by* STEPHEN SPENDER

**RUDYARD KIPLING**

*by* GEORGE ORWELL

**FRAGMENT**

**OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—VI**

*by* AUGUSTUS JOHN

POEM *by* GEORGE BARKER

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# HORIZON

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## COMMENT

THE death of Sickert, unhonoured, almost unnoticed, reminds us that we live in a philistine country. Camden Town, Dieppe, Paris, Bath, Brighton, Venice, the places he loved and painted, recall to us that art once was international, that the greatest English painter could yet stem off from the art of France and Italy, could be as English, and as Continental in the piazza of St. Mark's, or a South London music hall, by the Porte Saint Denis, or by a brass bedstead off the Tottenham Court Road. Looking at his best pictures such as the French and Venetian landscapes shown at the Redfern in 1940, or the *Granby Street* shown recently at the National Gallery, we are conscious not only of superb technique, but of the sacred moment, of the absorption of the painter in what he sees, which by talent and patience he is able to communicate. It is the communication of this sacred moment which constitutes a work of art. The vision might be insane, like Van Gogh's, or ponderous with sanity as in Degas or Cézanne, but it was there. Our tragedy is to live at a time when it is not. In a continent which is exterminating itself, a country which is socializing itself, a world that is destroying its standard of living, the existence of the great artist, the free personality, of the solitary smouldering creative figure whose thought and imagination challenge eternity, becomes more and more precarious. If we want great art after the war we must restore the freedom of Europe to our artists, and also guarantee them economic security. The defects of war art proceed from the personality of the artist, being shrunk by being fitted in to the military structure, and by its being denied the freedom of Europe, and so cut off from the masterpieces of the past. The sacred moment which the artist is too self-pitiful to communicate or too shallow to perceive has vanished.

There are ways in which we can all help to restore it. One is for those who love art to determine, after the war, to do everything to bring English and European culture together, to recognize that we will never be able to do without Europe again, nor they without us. (The new P.E.P. pamphlet 'Britain and Europe', 16 Queen Anne's Gate, 6d., puts this view admirably.) Another way is to try to make this country less philistine by bringing pressure on its leaders, as the P.E.N. Club has done in its letter to *The Times*

which begins, 'The apathetic disrespect shown by successive governments towards letters and men of letters has been one of the safeguards of freedom of expression. It is now, in the circumstances of this war, robbing this freedom of any significance.' In fact, there is very little most writers can do now except join an organization like the P.E.N. Club, which is international, and which may eventually establish shock troops and commandos of writers to put the case for the arts to the Government. The best cure for English philistinism is, however, to realize how easily it leads to fascist intolerance. Here is an example from Paris of the genuine thing, an attack on a publisher.

'Thirty years cauterizing of minds, thirty years slow moral decomposition! Thirty years of literary, spiritual human Nihilism . . . Gide—Corydon; Breton, the ectoplasm pedlar; Aragon, Archbishop of Ce Soir; Naville the anarchist banker; Eluard, the mouldy fruit; Peret, the insulter . . . Malraux. Gallimard helping the Reds in Spain to make their necklaces of amputated ears; Jules Romains distilling humanitarianistic poison. . . . The Objectivist spirit of the N.R.F. . . . The mountain of volumes published by Gallimard is not only a mountain of gold; it is a mountain of various poisons; there is one for every taste. Detective novels for the worldly, esthetic for the choirboys, philosophy for the bearded. Dream monger! Fargue monger! Freud monger! Jew monger! Gide monger! No, thank you very much! Murderer of the mind—Gallimard! Putrefactor, Gallimard! Leader of criminals, Gallimard! French youth spews you up.' (From *Le Llori*, Paris, reprinted from *View*.)

GEORGE BARKER

## O DOG, MY GOD

Dog, dog in my manger, drag at my heathen  
Heart where the swearing smoke of love  
Goes up as I give everything to the blaze.  
Drag at my fires, dog, drag at my altars  
Where Aztec I over my tabernacle raise  
The Absalom assassination I my murder.



## HORIZON

Dog, drag off the gifts too much I load  
My life as wishing tree too heavy with:  
And, dog, guide you my stray down quiet roads  
Where peace is: be my engine of myth  
That, dog, so drags me down my time  
Sooner I shall rest—from your overload.

Dog, is my shake when I come from water  
The cataract of my days, as red as danger?  
O my joy has jaws that seize in fangs  
The gift and hand of love always I sought for.  
They come to me with kingdoms for my paucity—  
Dog, why is my tooth red with their charity?

Mourn, dog, mourn over me where I lie  
Not dead but spitted on the pinpoint hazard  
The fiftieth angel. Bay, bay in the blizzard  
That brings a tear to my snowman's eye  
And buries us all in what we most treasured.  
Dog, why do we die so often before we die?

Dog, good dog, trick do and make me take  
Calmly the consciousness of the crime  
Born in the blood simply because we are here.  
Your father burns for his father's sake,  
So will your son burn in a further time  
Under the bush of joy you planted here.

Dog, dog, your bone I am, who tear my life  
Tatterdemalion from me. From you have no peace.  
No life at all unless you break my bone,  
No bed unless I sleep upon my grief  
That, without you, we are too much alone;  
No peace until no peace is a happy home.  
O Dog, my God, how can I cease to praise!

BEATRICE LEEDS

## HOW FIRM IS THE ATLANTIC HANDCLASP?

### I

It is necessary to emphasize immediately that in this article the word 'propaganda' is used throughout in its original sense, meaning the propagation of the gospel or the truth. In other words, it is important to avoid the connotation incurred from its use by Dr. Goebbels and other unscrupulous operators in the field: that of the dissemination of lies. Propaganda today is an instrument of communication. Whether or not propaganda is desirable depends entirely on what is being communicated.

Americans cannot this time say they were brought into the war through British propaganda. Not only has there been an almost complete lack of such activity, but those few things we have done were nearly all blunders. That America is now in the war on our side is *in spite of* our propaganda and not because of it. But what now? British propaganda has had handed to it, by the nature of the Japanese attack and Hitler's arrogant declaration of war on the U.S., a result beyond its most extravagant capabilities. There may, therefore, be a feeling that there is now no further need for propaganda.

This, of course, is as stupid as was the original watchword of 'no propaganda', which should have read 'no *bad* propaganda!' Not only is good propaganda to America just as important now as before she entered the conflict, but its potential now is much greater, its objectives wider in range and nobler in concept.

There is first the task of strengthening the bonds already existing between the two nations. Goodwill is now high, but criticism is not absent and there are signs of rocks ahead. This is a two-way job, as it is as important that we have faith in America as that she should believe in us. Second, there is the immediately vital problem of co-ordinating Britain's and America's propaganda offensive against the enemy, of increasing its pressure to many times what it is today, and of taking advantage of America's



store of experience and skill in this field. Finally, there is that objective worthy of any propagandist and on which may well depend the future well-being and happiness of mankind: to ensure that America joins with us fully in responsibility for the peace and post-war reconstruction.

## II

The first problem, therefore, facing our propagandists, is that of explaining Britain to America and preventing misunderstandings, jealousy and other ill conditions arising between the two countries. It is not enough for a country to be fighting with us. France has shown us this.

It is not suggested that the state of American morale is in any way like that of France in 1939. At the moment it is probably as good as our own. But the ebb and flow of the ocean of world-war may expose on the surface many ugly rocks on which our ship of accord may founder. Propaganda, in the original and best sense of that word, is as necessary in the integration of two allies as in that of our own population. The United States must in this matter be regarded more as a member of our own family of nations than as an ally of the nature of France. What, then, are the main points of friction likely to arise? What is it that the Americans are most likely to misunderstand and blame us for? What do we need to demonstrate and convince the United States about?

First there is the suspicion which might arise that we are not pulling our full weight in the war, now that they are involved. There is no suggestion that anyone thinks this at the moment. America's face is still too red from the Japanese slap. Of all the Isolationists only Senator Nye said it was Britain's fault that the U.S. was at war. Yet the fact remains that the Axis declared war on America because of what America had already done and was continuing to do to aid Britain. We must avoid, therefore, any act or expression of thought which will give the impression that we are not taking the war with redoubled seriousness. Critical as Americans were of our dilatoriness when they were still at peace, now that they are fighting they will be even more ready to find fault with us on this score. No piece of propaganda, therefore, which reaches America, no speech or statement made by an official, whether it be Lord Halifax or a junior clerk at the British Library of Information in New York, no lecture given by the



various Englishmen still touring the platforms of the country, no conversation between Englishmen and Americans, wherever it may be held, must give any other impression of this country than that of a great ally, stern, ruthless, energetic, hardworking, resolute and invincible. Americans must be made to realize how very very fortunate they are in having Great Britain as a partner in the struggle.

The second fact, of which it is necessary for our propagandists to convince the United States, is that the centre of gravity of this war is not in the Pacific but in Germany. The world nature of the conflict must never be allowed to slip from their minds. The President understands this only too well. And a Gallup survey taken after America's entry showed that to the question: 'Which country is the greater threat to America's future, Germany or Japan?' 64 per cent of the United States nation replied 'Germany', 15 per cent 'Japan', 15 per cent 'both equally', 6 per cent being undecided. But, although most of the former Isolationists have reneged wholeheartedly, they may again come round to their former view that Lease-Lend Aid to Britain and Russia should be curbed and concentrated more in the Pacific. America knows that the chief reason Japan has been so successful to date is the paucity of U.S. airplanes in the Pacific. She does not need to ask where these airplanes were. They had been sent to Russia and Libya. In January William Randolph Hearst was writing in his large chain of newspapers: 'The people of the United States want to give all possible aid to the people of the British Empire, not merely to England. Let us not forget the United States, although we have forgotten it very largely. The 40,000,000 English-speaking people of England are safe. The 150,000,000 English-speaking people of Australia, of the Australian Archipelago, of Canada, and of the United States are shadowed by the menace of ruthless Oriental savagery. England is safe, and doubly safe—now let us realize that it is safe, and turn our attention to making the rest of the English-speaking world safe.' The America First Committee, although now dissolved, urged after America's entry, 'All those who have subscribed to our principles to give their support to the war effort until the conflict *with Japan* is brought to successful conclusion'. And although Lindbergh has volunteered to the Army Air Corps, he has stated that America's first task is to equip her own forces. While not vocal at the moment, there may

well be a latent attitude of this type which it is essential should be prevented from rising to the surface and assuming importance.

A third matter about which Americans will be likely to require explanation is the use we make of Lease-Lend material. For example, at the present time, Lease-Lend food, paid for by the U.S. taxpayers, is sent free to this country, where it is sold to the people by the British Government. Where does the money go? It does not go back to America. Then, again, British manufacturers are still exporting, to South America and other countries, including the United States itself, goods made partly of Lease-Lend raw materials. Although in September a White Paper was issued prohibiting all exports except those needed to obtain essential war material from other countries, this succeeded only temporarily in satisfying American critics. Before she entered the war America was again demanding an explanation of this. The reasons for our continuing a modicum of export trade, including the use of some Lease-Lend material, are good ones and are indirectly helpful to America herself. But they are complicated and need clear exposition.

Finally, unless a far-reaching pooling agreement between the United Nations is made, America may wonder why we appear to pay our dominions for war materials and yet do not pay her for Lease-Lend goods. Again there is an explanation (much of the material from these other countries is obtained on credit which has exactly the same chance of being repaid as Lease-Lend material), but the explanation needs to be made in such a way that no American taxpayer feels he is being 'gypped'. When it is remembered that America considers that we have not yet paid her for the last war, it is clear that our propagandists should accept as a major assignment a clarification of the Lease-Lend problem.

Then there is the current and, we hope, passing source of irritation, the view which has been expressed in the House of Commons by a few red-faced dunderheads that units of the Royal Navy should not be placed under an American command which is so far inexperienced in this war's naval operations. Statements like these make Doctor Goebbels intoxicated with glee. What could be more enraging to a country already suffering from an inferiority complex through being less experienced in the war than ourselves? It is absolutely vital that we do not let America



tain the idea that Britain subscribes to the unified command principle only if that command is in British hands, that we doubt America's fighting qualities. So far there have not been complaints in America that United States forces should be placed under the command of British officers in the Pacific. But there may be if things go badly. While Wavell is the one British general widely known to the American public and is considered able, there has been much criticism of the incompetent British handling of Singapore. It is considered the perfect example of that dilatoriness and swollen headed complacency which Americans believe to be major characteristics of the British race.

As the kaleidoscope of war turns, various other cracks in the picture may occur and require immediate restoration. For example, if this country were invaded by Germany with partial success, the former Isolationist groups in America might start the thought in that nation's mind that Britain was about to make a separate peace with Hitler, in spite of the Declaration of the United Nations. Right up to the time of the Japanese assault, there continued to be criticism of the Munichers still holding high places in our Government.

Another suspicion, which events might cause to revive, is that the United States was after all fighting to preserve British imperialism and trade. This, of course, is an old friend amongst isolationist arguments. At the moment it is inoperative. But one cannot say that a twist of fate may not bring it once again into the forefront of some American minds.

Then supposing our dreams come true and Russia sweeps on in her greatness over the border of Germany and penetrates deep into that land. Suppose the Soviet ideology begins to penetrate the German soul. Suppose throughout this we maintain our existing close association with the Soviet Union. Then what will those large and powerful segments of American opinion, whose financial well-being depends on freedom of business enterprise, be thinking? Will not the fear which possessed domestic business circles and part of Wall Street in the spring of 1941, the fear that Britain was rapidly going Socialist, arise again in the same parts? Will they not visualize only too clearly Europe and Britain organized into one solid economic block; industries not only nationalized but continentalized—Europeanized? They know that private business in America cannot compete in a world

market with such a gargantuan rival, without going economically totalitarian itself in self-defence.

In the successful prosecution of the war against Germany is to be found another potential rupture in the Atlantic handclasp. With Europe freed, the immense task of reconstruction facing Britain and Russia might lead America to think we were neglecting the war in the Pacific and willing to leave her to take care of Japan by herself.

Such incredible things have happened in the last two years that any of these possibilities may happen and not seem extraordinary. So may others hard to think of at the moment. Such eventualities require the utmost alertness in our propaganda effort to America so that any misapprehension arising may be immediately corrected.

### III

Of course, a vice versa job faces the Americans. It is equally important for them that we do not attribute the wrong motives to her actions, that our people respond open-heartedly to the co-operation she offers us. America, therefore, must get busy quickly and start 'selling' herself to Britain. Far-sightedly, we have not waited for America to do this, but have started the job for her. The Ministry of Information have for many months sponsored lectures on this very subject. And these are not the only steps which Britain is taking to aid America in this way. It is, perhaps, the most enlightened move in the propaganda field that we have ever taken. But although we can assist, the main job in this field must obviously be done by America herself. What are the possible propaganda obstacles she will have to overcome?

First, there may arise the doubt in our minds that America is still not taking her full share of the war burden, a feeling that she is not reorganizing her economy rapidly enough, that she is still clinging to 'business as usual', that she is not being sufficiently ruthless in conscripting man-power for the forces and industry. This is likely to be an unfounded suspicion, because America, unlike Britain, is a young man in a hurry. More likely to obtain credence is the view that more United States troops should be sent to Europe. Hand in hand with the job of convincing us that America is doing all she can in this sphere will be the more general one of persuading us that she is not concentrating the major part



of her efforts in the Pacific zone, but is aiding us to the utmost of her ability in the fight against Hitler.

An indication of the type of difficulty, which unforeseeable events of war may cause to arise, was the statement by Australia's Prime Minister Curtin that his country must rely in future more on America than Great Britain. Such a statement raises the large question of a possible re-orientation of the planetary system of the British Commonwealth. (Canada also has natural ties with the United States.) American propaganda must prevent old Mother Britain getting the idea that her children are being enticed away by Uncle Sam. Any such transfer of affections, we can be sure, would only be the result of the inevitable laws of political gravity and against the wishes of a nation which has for many years regretted its colonial responsibility towards the Philippines.

Another cause of conflict, though less likely, might arise should Japan be defeated. Then Britain might fear America's interest in the war was ended and that she might, United Nations Declaration notwithstanding, consider coming to terms with Germany. If the struggle in Europe looks like costing America too high a price. Then there is another possibility we may come to believe. That Britain will be so exhausted by the strains and stresses of war that, at its conclusion, America will be in a position to direct exactly as she likes the peace treaties and reconstruction. Doctor Goebbels has for some time already been busy telling us, through the mouth of Lord Haw-Haw and others, that the British are now completely under the domination of the United States and that Churchill is Roosevelt's tool.

Or, sectional interests in this country may foresee the U.S. taking away the export markets now restricted for us. A similar suspicion, finding possible credence in industrial interests, is that, after the war, America will insist on a no-tariff policy and will thereby flood our country with cheap motor cars and other mass-produced goods, thus ruining certain British industries. This latter suspicion may be well founded, and if so, although harmful to small segments of the population temporarily dependent on the success of protected trades, it will be beneficial to the country as a whole. But the sectional interests who will suffer for the general good will cause trouble and we must all be on the alert for it.

All these potential sources of friction between America and ourselves will be aggravated by German propaganda. Cleavages,

far less likely to become important, have received attention. But if we foil the enemy in his plan of disintegration, what a wonderful partnership these two great democracies will make! They differ from each other. But they differ in just those ways which make a union so complementary. On the one hand the tradition, the steadiness, the integrity, the patience, the fortitude, the experience in international affairs. Couple with this the dynamic energy, the eagerness for experiment, the daring courage, enthusiasm and youthfulness of America. These complementary qualities, cemented by the basic similarity of interests, of attitude towards life, will produce such a partnership that history has never seen. A combination from which not only their peoples will benefit, but for which the whole of mankind may well be grateful for the lasting peace and freedom and happiness which it guarantees.

#### IV

In addition to the work done by the propagandists of each country, there are various joint actions which should be taken to improve Anglo-American relations. For example, one obvious method of improving relations is through workers' organizations, similar to what is being done between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. A Trades Union Congress delegation has already been to America at the invitation of the American Federation of Labour, but there has been no return visit. This is due to the civil war between the American Federation of Labour and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The A.F. of L. refuses to come to Britain in the company of the C.I.O. So the T.U.C., loyal to the A.F. of L. because it is the older organization and because the C.I.O. was regarded as Communist influenced, will not invite the C.I.O.

But with the truce agreed in December by both capital and labour and the acceptance of the arbitration principle, even in the case of the 'closed shop' problem, the feud which has split American labour for so long may be mitigated and a *modus vivendi* worked out for just such occasions as this. We can, therefore, look forward to a greater interchange of workers' representatives between the two countries in future.

In fact, a big increase in the number of people on official business passing between the two countries would seem immediately desirable. There is so much to be gained from the interchange of



experience, knowledge and talent in every phase of war activity.

An example of such interchange is seen in the recent visit to America of Mr. Lawrence F. Easterbrook, of the Ministry of Agriculture. Mr. Easterbrook covered that continent's agricultural areas pretty thoroughly including many of the most remote localities. He appears to have made a good impression. Now he has returned to this country to initiate the Anglo-American Agricultural News Service, the purpose of which is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between farmers of the two countries. This is the type of activity which should be widely copied by the multitude of other industrial and mercantile interests common to both nations.

Moreover, we should not stop there. The same developments should take place on the cultural front as well as on the trade and business front. During 1941, several of America's leading publishers such as George Backer of the *New York Post*, Eugene Meyer of the *Washington Post*, and Ralph Ingersoll, editor of New York's *P.M.*, visited this country. So also did many distinguished U.S. foreign correspondents like Vincent Sheean, Raymond Clapper, Raymond Gram Swing, Dorothy Thompson and Erika Mann. On more or less official business came playwrights Robert Sherwood and Samuel Spewack, *Mr. Deeds'* author Robert Riskin, and urbane critic Alexander Woolcott. For the International P.E.N. Conference came Thornton Wilder and Dos Passos. Such visits as these could, and perhaps did in effect, form a spearhead of a cultural mission. But now that America is in the war, such visits will have a tendency to stop. Not only must this be prevented, but we, in our turn, must send our own cultural leaders to the United States. To balance our own War Artists' work exhibited in the U.S., could be the arrival of a travelling exhibition of American painting, and American theatrical companies. A comprehensive interchange between democracies of personnel and the free expression of views can only strengthen their faith in each other and in themselves, thus ironing out foolish misconceptions and prejudices. But this big increase in the interchange of personnel cannot take place until the present lamentable paucity of transport is remedied. It is difficult for an official, unless he be of exceptionally high standing, to obtain an air reservation for crossing the Atlantic without several weeks' notice being given. Even then,

it is more likely than not that his journey will be postponed because his place will be given to a more eminent person at the last minute. More than one important U.S. official has been left standing disappointed on the airfield in this way; to say nothing of many British.

Moreover, the mail service is little better, confidential reports sometimes taking several weeks to make the crossing. Nothing less than a daily service for both mail and passengers is required if the principle of pooling resources is to be fully implemented. The effect on our military effort of diverting from operational work the few long-range airplanes sufficient for this daily service over the Atlantic would be much more than offset by the stimulus and co-ordination which such facilities would bring to the basic planning of the joint war effort.

## V

The second great work in the propaganda field awaits Anglo-American co-operation in its achievement. This is the co-ordination and stimulation of the propaganda war against the enemy. Just as there must be a unity of military command between the United Nations, so also must there be unity in the political warfare conducted by means of the propaganda instrument. But there must be more than unity. There must be a dynamic increase in force. Our propaganda is still badly hamstrung and prevented from realizing its full potential. Yet now is the time when we can really take the offensive on this front, when the change in the trend of the enemy's fortunes must be penetrating to them, when we have available to us the badly needed technical help of the Americans in this field.

One of America's leading columnists and radio commentators was asked, on his recent visit to this country, whether America would do a better job at propaganda than Britain had done. 'I think so,' he said, 'don't forget we have some pretty good advertising agents over there.' This reply may lead many so-called educated English people to smirk or to throw up their hands in simulation of horror. But that is because the words 'advertising agent' in America mean something quite different from what they mean here. A country lawyer and Sir Norman Birkett have similar functions in defending a client in court. The difference



comes in the size of the problem to be dealt with, the calibre of the operator, and the fee charged. American advertising agents charge their clients fifty per cent more than do advertising agents in this country. That fifty per cent is not paid for nothing.

In the United States the function of the advertising agent is extended over a considerably wider field of business activity than in this country. Here the agent is apt to do little more than design and write advertisements that will please his manufacturer client. He may not even recommend the media to be used. Whereas in America the advertising agent will take virtually the whole selling problem off his client's hands, including such questions as whether the product is right in its present form or should be re-designed; whether the packet in which the product is sold should not be a different colour or shape; whether the product should be re-priced; whether the discounts to the trade are the most advantageous; whether the product is distributed in a sufficient number of shops; in the right type of shops; whether the number of travelling salesmen are sufficient or too many; whether they are selling as well as they should be; and so forth. All of these problems and some others are what the American advertising agent is paid to solve. By ninety per cent of English advertising agents they are not even considered.

In order that this extensive service can be rendered, the personnel of American advertising agencies is necessarily of a much higher type as regards intelligence, ability, training, education and general background.

This difference between the U.S. advertising agent and the English concern of the same name is emphasized at length because it is the failure of our officials to realize this difference that is the basic reason why American commercial propaganda technique hasn't been used in this country yet in the operation of political propaganda. The Americans are using it already in South America, the only area to date in regard to which they have an effectively organized propaganda effort. To the Nelson Rockefeller Committee, formed for this purpose, have been appointed a number of leading advertising executives and research personnel. When Mr. James W. Young, vice-president of the J. Walter Thompson Company, America's largest advertising agency, had to resign the head of the Communications Division of this committee on grounds of ill-health, he was replaced by another outstanding

man in the advertising world, Mr. Don Francisco, president of the Lord and Thomas advertising agency.

No one would suggest that English advertising men should play any greater part in our political propaganda than to staff the General Production Division of the M.O.I. This they are now doing in fair number and doing it well. For 'propaganda tactics' the English type of advertising man is capable and experienced. Journalists, film and radio men, should also be used, depending on the media chosen. But there are other functions of political propaganda roughly covered by the terms grand strategy, strategy, planning and co-ordination, the need for which officials are only just beginning to realize. The people to carry out these functions are not English advertising men any more than civil servants, diplomats or retired admirals. Nor are they journalists. The only type of person fitted for this job by training and practical experience in the field of common human emotions and reasoning is one who hardly yet exists in this country: the American advertising agent.

Such a species does not live here because of the difference between the economic progress of the two countries as regards the distribution of consumer goods. When after the war the free trade area available to this country is sufficiently widened to allow mass production and mass distribution of consumer goods to reach the stage hitherto only attained in America, then a new economic function will arise requiring this new type of thinking and experience.

America's entry into the war, therefore, will help us in this important way: she will insist that our present propaganda bungling stops, and will supply the technicians to show us how it ought to be done. We shall be in a position similar to that of the Soviets when they were shown by American technicians how to build factories and operate machines. As a matter of fact, the Russians could have told us last June how to operate the propaganda machine, but, brilliant though our volteface was, we could not take it so far as to use weapons bearing the revolutionary taint. It was a confusion in the mind of officialdom between the propaganda weapon and the cause in which it had previously been used which made us shy away from the use of even the word 'propaganda', let alone use of the weapon. It was as if we now refused to use aircraft carriers in groups because 'those horrid

little brown men' (Lord Derby's phrase) had already done so. Dr said that tanks, used so successfully in the cause of Nazidom, were unsuitable to be used in that of Democracy. Fortunately, our military command has not been so muddle-headed as our propaganda command.

## VI

Finally comes the biggest propaganda job of all. And Britain must tackle it alone. On the successful comradeship of the two countries depends not only the rapid conclusion of the war but the success of the peace. In 1917 our propaganda was supposed to have brought America into the war. But it failed to bring her into the war. This time it didn't bring her into the war. It *must* bring her into the peace. We must make certain that America will join with us in planning and carrying into effect the peace and reconstruction following victory.

It seems comparatively easy now when one reads of the meetings, speeches and resolutions made across the Atlantic. So it must have seemed when President Wilson issued his Fourteen Points. So much so that the enemy believed America would guarantee a peace based on them. We must remember that behind the face of national unity in America at the moment, the Isolationist attitudes are still latent. When the war is over those who were isolationists before it started will want an Isolationist peace. Despite the lessons of the past they will be reluctant for America to accept the position of world responsibility which events have thrust upon her. The fact that they will be talking in terms of a situation existing a few decades ago will not deter them. It did not deter them when they preached the same policies before Pearl Harbour.

How difficult will be the job of ensuring that America grows up and accepts her full stature in the affairs of mankind will depend largely on the success with which the second task outlined in this article is accomplished: the maintenance of the existing state of mutual trust and goodwill throughout all the difficulties of a working partnership.

At the moment there are plenty of good resolutions in America which augur well for the successful achievement of this third great task which we must set ourselves. But these good intentions have a habit of fading away when victory arrives. It is the duty



of our propagandists to make sure that this time these good resolutions are followed out. It is not only their duty to us, it is their duty to America and to the world.

## VII

In summary, it is clear that Britain's failure hitherto in her propaganda to America has been more than remedied by the method of Japan's attack in the Pacific and Hitler's declaration of war on the United States. But, far from this being a reason for our propagandists assuming there is no more to be done, it provides the opportunity for three tasks of the greatest importance.

First comes the maintenance of the existing high state of goodwill and trust between the two nations. This is a two-way job. The responsibility of projecting Britain to America lying with ourselves; and that of explaining the United States to Britain with the Americans.

Second, now is the time to take the offensive, in concert with the other United Nations, on the propaganda front against the enemy. In doing this we must recognize the technical qualifications of the United States in this field and accept their direction.

Finally, it is the duty of Britain's propagandists, not only to us, but to America and the world, to make certain the United States joins with us this time in full post-war responsibility.

ROLLO WOOLLEY

## THE PUPIL

THERE was no wind. The windsock was an empty sleeve hanging limp and lifeless from its post. Smoke from the two factory chimneys rose in slender columns into the great basin of hazy sky. It was one of those summer afternoons when one has to climb up through a few thousand feet of sultry haze before reaching the clear sky, and then the haze turns into a black circle of horizon round a dome of lucid blue. Below the haze clouds look like watery ghosts, blurred pre-natal shapes, but above it they curve and curl into clear white lines, forming miniature ranges of white sky mountains.

On the edge of the aerodrome the pupil lay on his back shielding his eyes from the sun. He watched the little training aeroplanes flying overhead as they made their approach into wind, some floating down so gently and gracefully that they ended just skimming the top of the grass, while others foundered with sudden indignant bursts of engine as if they were afraid to land. Occasionally the pupil looked up to anticipate a doubtful landing; sometimes he sat up to scan the field for any sign of his flying instructor, only to fall back again on to his couch of parachute and sandbags. Planes kept drawing up and new pupils clambered in and out of the back cockpit. Slowly the old men reached up to moving the propellers, stepping warily aside to avoid the sudden whirling whirl of blades. Again and again their hoarse voices repeated the familiar ritual: petrol on, switches off, throttle closed. Contact, Contact! The afternoon crept on to the usual sequence of planes arriving and waiting and taxiing away. The petrol wagon shuffled along for refuelling; the Naafi car came, bringing cups of murky tea and little round cakes. The sun moved slowly round over the camouflaged hangar roofs and every now and then breaths of cooler air disturbed the slender stems of smoke. Aeroplanes continued to follow each other round and round like busy scurrying insects.

The pupil was asleep when his instructor came; he opened his eyes to see a helmet swung mockingly over his face and the instructor in his black flying suit towering over him like a black shadow. 'Get up,' he said, 'you've got to fly.'

The instructor threw off his parachute and sat down on the sandbags; he began fumbling in a pocket, chucking out maps and matches and old letters and bits of paper; then he lit a cigarette and smoothed out a piece of paper.

'Got a pencil?' he said. 'You've got about an hour. But get her rolled up first.'

The pupil stood rubbing his eyes, a little dizzy with heat and sleep.

'Yes, sir,' he said.

The instructor was writing something on the slip of paper. He glanced casually up at the sky.

'Still all right for a spot of aerobatics I should think. Anyhow you can climb up and see. Try and get in number ten and twenty-two will you?'

'Okay, sir,' said the pupil.

He bent down to sign the paper.

'Bring her back and put her on pickets, sir?'

The instructor nodded.

The pupil smiled and walked over to his plane. It had just been refuelled and one of the old swinger men was shoving chocks in front of the wheels. Switches off. Contact. 'Contact!' he shouted back. It started up easily, sending a cool gush of air playing round the pupil's head, ruffling the grass behind. He felt refreshed and eager to fly up through this heaviness of yellow haze, like a swimmer waiting to dive into the clear water of a pool.

It was soon after six o'clock when the pupil left the ground. The plane climbed with a comfortable humming sound, and he touched back on the stick with small jerks of the fingers to feel its power of lift, seeing the nose of the plane leap up and down responsively. From the rear cockpit the wings seemed to him separate entities which could roll and twist as if by some mysterious understanding. Still climbing he raised each wing gently in turn to convince himself of their obedience, rather as one calls or beckons to some perfectly trained animal. He kicked viciously at the rudder to enjoy the gusts of wind tearing at his face. He was the master, the supreme commander, alone: this, he thought, is the real thrill of flying solo, this huge power contained like magic in the palm of one's hand. . . .

Already he had escaped the tiresome ring of planes circuiting the aerodrome, and setting the throttle he trimmed her to climb steadily up; he could take his hands off the controls and let the plane lift him with a rich throb of engine higher and higher into the haze. The haze caught the light like the dust swimming in shafts of sunlight that slant through closed shutters. Only things yellow and orange coloured stood out in it; here and there he could recognize a new house being built or shining yellow fields of corn. The pupil climbed on confidently, knowing that he was flying over familiar country.

At three thousand feet he was emerging into clearer sky and the ground sank away uncertainly in colourless depth below. A layer of cumulus cloud floated above the sea of haze, presenting rows of white beads strung out from horizon to horizon. He searched for gaps between those white clouds, and climbed on higher and higher, circling round the cloud bases. The sun shone



azzlingly bright in an emerald ceiling of sky; just a tip, a tiny segment, was cut by the dark edge of haze, and where this tip touched it began to turn into a long streak of gold.

The pupil sang as he climbed. He felt himself the only thing moving in this empty bowl of sky, the only being living in its true clarity. This sense of freedom is so exhilarating that the pilot feels he must turn and dive and spin to accompany his singing and to assert his presence in this vast loneliness: he has to boast to the earth that he is above it, for all who love flying seek to achieve freedom from its shapes and shadows, escaping the rigidity and the permanence of the land. The music of the sky has the freedom of all space and the relentless rhythm of all time. So locking the knots the pupil braced himself in his straps and dived. At seven thousand feet he had plenty of height to spare. He looped, he turned on the stall, reaching into the depths of sky and rushing down in effortless sweeping circles. . . . He tried rolling the plane: again and again he poised the nose delicately on the cloud horizon and eased her slowly, deliberately round. He imagined the instructor commenting, correcting, shouting down the speaking tube. But there was only the blurred droning of engine in his ears, and he whispered to himself, 'Lovely . . . Christ, how lovely!'

As he glided down, the pupil leant over the side scanning the country below him, hoping to find some familiar landmark. He could pick out the blue smoke of a village on the edge of some woods, and imagining he had drifted a bit to the north while doing aerobatics, he turned south. He opened a map and looked for it for the woods, but he thought that they were perhaps too small to show up. It was impossible to see far to the right now because the sun was a rose red glow in the haze. A pink ribbon of cloud caught the light and he followed it gratefully, turning from side to side uncertainly in search of a town. He was flying over flat fields in which cattle grazed peacefully. Late harvesters were finishing work, he could see their black coats bicycling in twos and threes down the lanes. He was flying lower to see more clearly; some children waved to him from a haystack and he waved back, refusing to admit to himself that he was beginning to feel lost and afraid. He tried to calculate how far away he could have flown in an hour, for already he was due down at the aerodrome. Presently he came across a fair-sized landing ground

where some bombers were revving up in preparation for night flying; a cheerful blaze of light flooded from the open hangar doors, and men were carrying red lamps across the field. He circled round, half wanting to land, hesitating: seeing the lights had somehow given him confidence, and at the same time a sense of foolishness made him reluctant to give up so soon. He turned away, altering his compass to south-east.

Soon the first darkness of night was creeping over the horizon, slurring lines and shapes, but he reckoned there was light enough to see for another half-hour yet. He found himself flying parallel to a railway; it was hard to read the map in this half light, so he stuck it in a pocket. The railway lines seemed to go on maddeningly straight for ever, disappearing into the darkness, and gradually he surrendered to the hopeless feeling of being lost and wanting only to land, but it seemed too late now to try finding a way back to the field with lights. The country was changing; it became more wooded and small hills rose all round him. Long white fingers of mist were reaching out from the valleys; the land darkened with new shadows; the evening seemed to menace him with its beautiful tranquillity. He wiped the windscreen with his fingers and peered ahead. Suddenly he was flying in the middle of the white mist. It had taken him unawares, wrapping itself treacherously round him in chill moist folds. He felt an icy fear seize him that he was flying into the hills; for a moment it paralysed his body. The instruments showed uncertain flickering needles; helplessly he watched the airspeed rising as the nose went down, then he opened the throttle and pulled back on the stick with the tenseness of the inexperienced pilot. The needles seemed to settle down and he climbed up, not caring in which direction. He only wanted to get higher, higher . . .

When at last he came out of the mist the altimeter was reading two thousand feet and he was flying over an unbroken sea of silken white; waves of gloom lay in its hollows. It was mysterious and very beautiful. The pupil shivered a little; he tried to wind his scarf tighter round his neck, but his fingers were numb with cold and fear. Flying was difficult because it was so hard to distinguish the instruments and he could only guess the position of the horizon. An ugly mask of fog sprawled across the sky and smothered the last flickering red of the sun; little grey wisps of it came to meet him. Looking over the side he could see flames

aring out of the exhaust, and it gave him the impression that he was burning a path into the night.

The pupil shouted down the speaking tube to an imaginary pilot in front. Then he put the end of his ear phones to his mouth and shouted down that, so that this time his voice struck back loud and harsh in his ears, and in the engulfing blackness it cheered him because it was so real. The plane slid now through empty tenebrous gaps of cloud and still he climbed up. The engine made a far-away sound which hummed itself in a comforting tone into his mind. His body relaxed and succumbed to a feeling of unutterable drowsiness. He imagined he was in a country train which crawled along a familiar line, very slowly, stopping at lots of small halts and stations; they were beginning to light the lamps at each station and guards shouted and swung lanterns in the mist; he watched the red sparks from the engine fly past the carriage window and vanish in the darkness; he was a small boy on his way back from school.

Again he shouted to hear his own voice. It was much colder and he reckoned he must be some six thousand feet up, but it was impossible to read the altimeter. He felt braver now because there was no longer any alternative: he could only climb on into the ever deepening chasm of cloud: he was alone, challenging the night. He had the feeling that he dreamed and yet was awake in his dream. . . .

Suddenly the night lay over and under the plane. It floated in a sparkling ocean of stars, free again in a land of frozen beauty. He switched off and turned off the petrol, but for ages the engine continued to fire and splutter. Then the movement of the propeller became slower and slower; it swung itself jerkily, painfully round until it stopped, hanging there like a dead thing, and there was no sound. Only the rushing, whistling air singing in the trailing wires. This was how he wanted it. This was how it could have been in his dream. The pupil unfastened the straps of the safety harness which secures the pilot in the cockpit. Then very slowly, very carefully, he rolled the plane over on to its back until he no longer felt anything firm or solid beneath him, and he was falling, falling, into an icy space, like a sleeper into the deepest of sleep.



STEPHEN SPENDER

## POETRY IN 1941<sup>1</sup>

FACED with more than thirty volumes of poetry written in the last year or eighteen months, I felt that, after reading them all, I would be too confused to discriminate. Actually, I found that the reading helped to clear my mind. I feel more certain, at the moment of writing this, of what I like in the work of these poets than I had expected. I have revised some of my earlier judgments, and I have a rough idea of the position of poetry in 1941, and of what has been written in the way of 'war poetry'.

These volumes dispel one prejudice held by some younger poets, and confirm one held by the newspaper-reading public. The first is that very little poetry by young and less known poets is being published. The second, the popular one, is that there are no 'war-poets'. This is certainly confirmed by Kiedrych Rhys's anthology of *Poems from the Forces*. There are some interesting poets in this collection, but the war has only made the same kind of superficial impression on them as one found in the first exhibitions of paintings by War Artists: one is aware of barrage balloons in the sky, the boredom of fatigues, home-sickness, a few bombed ruins, but certainly not of Dunkirk and Libya; still less of what the war is about. These poets regard the war from the *outside*: it is not *their* war they seem to say. They disclaim all responsibility for it; they don't like it, they don't understand it, and they don't wish to do so.

War swaggers past the window  
Where youth, promiscuous, seeks the utter  
Refinement of desire;  
I think war is death, perhaps,  
But again it springs from monotony to pain,  
And I think war perhaps is birth.

The poet (Emanuel Litvinoff) then goes on to compare war to a brothel. War is at once something which has got hold of him and

<sup>1</sup>Other than Auden's *New Year Letter* and Roger's *Awake* which have already been reviewed in *Horizon*.

something outside himself, like a funeral, a brothel or an entertainment. He does not find the roots of it, which he calls death, in his own heart, nor does he find the birth of a new world after the war in himself.

Mr. Kiedrych Rhys writes:

Iceland,  
Singapore and the Near East,  
are certain hazy abstractions.

Killing is automatic:

machines are daily marvels  
still capable of impersonality to the remote  
conscripts who will fire at one another nevertheless.  
But will the rulers escape scot-free this time?

once back to gaunt men lying on their beds thinking of their wives, a recurrent theme with these poets.

What is curious, is that whilst in his poetry Mr. Rhys only refers to the war to disclaim it; in his Introduction he rounds on the critics for asking 'Where are the war poets?' His answer is 'under your nose'.<sup>1</sup> He must surely mean this only in a literal sense. It is true that there are poets in uniform. But so far none of them seems to have created in imaginative terms (1) any major event in the war; (2) any statement of the nature of the struggle in which we are involved, either as suffering or as ideas; (3) any positive faith in the democracy for which we are fighting; (4) any effective statement against war.

I am not blaming the young poets for this. I am simply stating what I have gleaned from a careful reading of these thirty-odd volumes, and, in particular, *Poems from the Forces*. To be quite fair, I should qualify these remarks by saying that one or two poets have tried to write about the war. For example, there is Mr. Christopher Isherwood's conscientious Royal Academy piece *S.O.S. Ludlow*, and there are Mr. Rostrevor Hamilton's *Apollyon and Other Poems*. But Mr. Hassall never succeeds in being more than industriously

incidentally this remark is lifted, without acknowledgment, from *Horizon's* comment, January 1941, which begins: 'About this time of year articles are called "Where are our war poets?" The answer is "under your nose".'

literary (he is the winner of the Hawthornden Prize, as his publishers take care to point out), and Mr. Hamilton's fire-breathing agitation is all too noble and too pure to seem anything but morally fogged. It recalls the poetry written by Robert Bridges during the last war. However, his work is never as old-fogeyish as that of R. N. Currey in *Tiresias and Other Poems*, with its querulous preface. Only Alun Lewis seems really to have entered into some of the more dreary aspects of being a conscript; and even he does not take us very deep or very far.

There are several reasons for this comparative detachment of the poets from the war as war. The first is the lack of any general unifying and clarifying experience which gives a sense of the whole war. So far from feeling at the centre of the war the members of the Forces feel shut off from life before and after it and even from the war itself. Moreover, they live a kind of life in which it is not possible to meditate. In all the numerous agitation and accusations which take the place today of literary criticism very little has been said about the fact that it is necessary to have time, quiet, and a contemplative habit of mind in order to write poetry. Poetry is largely a matter of habit of mind, like prayer or the visions of mediæval saints. It is not enough to have inspiration, one must also have a few hours every day alone, sitting in a room, *without the wireless on*, in order to develop, to think over, to explore, inspiration. The great weakness of the youngest poets (to my mind) is that they do not explore their ideas and experiences. They seem to think it is quite enough to have ideas, sensations and images, and to note them down. Don't blame the poets for this, blame the war if you like; but all the same it seems to show a lack of what, in the last analysis, is literary sense in several of these poets, that they don't seem aware of what is wrong; they pride themselves on being mere enthusiasts, inspirationalists, apocalyptics. Mr. Kiedrych Rhys, who certainly has a genuine poetic vein, slams down lines like this:

O my darling and my own,  
 Remember the willows by the river in summer,  
 Remember always our love in wintry weather,  
 Remember the cottage, the bridge, the flowers, the fields;  
 O never forget the power love yields and wields.

Now these invocations tell us practically nothing. The river



the willows, the bridge, are not re-created, they are simply stated, and it is left to the reader to try to imagine the poetry which Mr. Rhys has failed to write. I don't blame him for this, because a nation at war is a nation of trivialities, and the one illusion one must be allowed to preserve in order to write poetry is that life is not a succession of important and sensational trivialities, but that it contains a certain continuity, order and harmony, besides military commands and sensations and explosions. But I do blame him when he attacks Mr. Connolly for having said in the first months of war, before the invasion of Norway, that 'War is the enemy of creative activity and writers and painters are right and wise to ignore it.' One may or may not disagree with this remark, but only a fool could dismiss it as an absurdity. It represents a truth which makes the war worth fighting. Mr. Rhys accuses Mr. Connolly of 'muddy thinking'; but it is to him himself that the mud sticks..

Besides Mr. Rhys and Alun Lewis, the interesting poets in this volume are Gavin Ewart, G. S. Fraser, Roy Fuller, J. F. Hendry, A. A. Levy, Emanuel Litvinoff, Mervyn Peake, Alan Rook, Tom Scott and John Waller. This really is quite an impressive list. G. S. Fraser is an uneven, and often imitative poet, but he can write excellent nostalgic lines. He can create an atmosphere, make a picture which is memorable:

Down by the drumming of the river  
Is a griever's evening, cracker of crazy leaves,  
Is fire-snap, whip-snap, is bright weather dancing:  
Is a swan-reft river, inconsolably grieves.

This has little to do with the war. Nor have Mr. Gavin Ewart's five sonnets, which are the best poems he has written. Alan Rook is a sensitive and intelligent Oxford poet, a bit wordy with something of the fluidity of Prokosch. Emanuel Litvinoff can be powerful. It is impossible to judge A. A. Levy on sixteen lines, which are all I have seen of his work, but the short poem 'Out of Dust' shows a freedom of development and imagination which carry one to the end. Waller has something in common with Rook and Fuller; these three are attractive writers, but at present they lack dynamic energy.

Mervyn Peake is a poet who impresses me by his sincerity. His writing is technically weak, but there is a genuine feeling for life,

and also a genuine personality behind it, combined with a sense of words that is sometimes striking. His poems are enjoyable, and he must be a remarkably sincere and intelligent person.

Several of the youngest writers show talent and imagination, but as I have said above, it is rarer for them to show a literary sense. Waller, Fraser and Rook write in a university tradition, but Vernon Watkins is the new poet who shows signs of taking most trouble about his writing. His poems are obviously the result of great devotion to the idea of poetry and to hard work unattached to any ulterior motive. The result is a technique which can sustain a poem of pure rhapsody such as 'After Sunset' for several pages. The emotional range of his poems is limited and what, when one is talking of a man's mind, one means by 'feminine'. These are poems of pity, and of passive experience. I doubt whether poetry as isolated as this can strike the reader as more than one of the minor pleasures today, but, as such, the pleasure of Mr. Watkins's work is very real indeed. Another pleasurable poet is Francis Scarfe. His poems are more visual, gayer than those of Watkins. Watkins seems to live absorbed in a world of poetry; Scarfe to go round with a pair of scissors cutting up reality into brightly coloured montages.

To preserve some sense of discrimination amongst the poets whom I like, I am reduced to having to give marks and places. Purely for convenience's sake, in dealing with these dozens of poets, and not because I believe in a Stock Exchange of the arts, I place the poet I now come to first of the younger writers. This is Terence Tiller. Having read his poems several times, I think that they combine the merits of the other younger writers on this list and lack their defects. Mr. Tiller is as accomplished as Vernon Watkins, without being so literary. He can use effective and violent imagery, and can think, in addition to this. His poems strike one as whole, and as well organized. He can write about the present without reminding one of the headlines of the morning newspaper, full of 'certain hazy abstractions' such as 'Iceland, Singapore and the Near East':

In days of nightingales, and when our streets  
are all nostalgic turnings, and the west  
a broken harbour, there will be terror walking.  
You will not know the crossing of our hearts,  
the final stake that burrows through the breast.

The cruel delicious voices of the birds  
will be silent for you. For you unwaking.

Then all my journeys will be bellman-like,  
a wanderer in your city crying hours.

Call me the raven friend; that cry will come.

Mr. Tiller is still a little under the influence of Auden, and his poetry has not got that precision of observation which strikes home again and again, as do the early poems of Eliot. All the same, these musical and thoughtful poems grow on one as something genuine, without being subjective and personal.

A. L. Rowse will be familiar to most readers of *Horizon* as an historian and critic. His poems are more interesting as a document than as poetry, though there is certainly a vein of poetry concealed beneath their amateurishness. Rowse is best describing Cornish village scenes, and he can be tart and acute about a visit to the dentist. He is less successful in developing the philosophy which runs through these poems. Some years ago he despised humanity, hating the human species particularly for getting married and making love. In his most recent poems he says he has become reconciled to it. The hatred is expressed in lines which certainly have the merit of acidity, the love limps:

I must some signal service then perform  
to lessen this lot of human suffering,  
make retribution for past bitterness,  
turn hate into love, subject the mind  
to discipline, myself prepare.

It is necessary to read these lines as prose to see how badly they are written. Just as upper-class people when they turn communist often behave in an illogical way which they imagine suits their new working-class environment, so prose writers when they become poets tend to express sentiments which they would be ashamed to put into prose. Even Mr. Rowse in 1936 would scarcely have dreamed in prose that his was quite so much the voice of one crying in the wilderness (perhaps even the mad voice of Swift, he hints) because he was shocked at the international situation. What really impresses me about these poems is that they are so much the voice of Oxford: Oxford shut off and superior in its intellectual isolation, imagining that nothing exists outside its own conversations,



looking at the goings on of life outside, horrified and titillated at all the bad taste. The very thing it might offer—quite ordinary fastidiousness—it thinks that it alone possesses. Whilst at the same time, just because it is so isolated, it can express little but impotence, footnotes, remarks and observations, echoes of the voices of men in the past and present who have tasted life before they acquired a distaste for it.

Miss Ann Ridler's poems deserve respect. She writes about marriage and on Christian themes with real sensitivity and firmness of perception. Like Mr. Peake's, her poems are sincerely personal, and they make sympathetic and attractive reading. A poetess who has received less attention is Miss Ursula Wood, who also has the merit of being honest and sensitive. There is a spinsterish book of verses called *The Rude Potato* by Miss Ruth Pitter: these things will out even in the best Anglo-Catholic circles; Miss Pitter conceived the thought of a tuber of irregular shape, and a book of irregular verses is the result. The readers of her more religious poems will be left, no doubt, piously hoping that she will now weave this erotic imagery into harmony with her devouter work, as other mystics before her have done. Miss Lilian Bowes-Lyon has produced a new volume of poems which have the merits of her earlier work. I like these poems, but there is little that is really new, and I think it is a pity that her poems are wrapped in so many nebulous phrases. 'Sagittarius', whom I imagine also to be a woman poet, has gone serious and produced an embarrassing volume of pastiches called *London Watches*. There is a lot to be said for humorous parody of past masters, but attempts to express serious feelings in the manner of a past poet are doomed to failure. I prefer Miss Sagittarius in what her publishers, to judge from the wrapper, would doubtless call 'more bitter vein'.

After the ladies, I come upon Mr. Nicholas Moore. He is, to my mind, the prime example of what one might call the 'Little Jack Horner' School of poets who put in a thumb and pull out a plum and say 'What a good boy am I!' His title, *Buzzing Around with a Bee*, implies as much.

Any old bee  
Is good enough for me

(if they had occurred to him, he would have written these lines; he writes down anything that occurs to him) seems to be his

otto. He has great energy, intellectual power of a certain order, and vitality, of a sort. If he can only discipline his mind, he may have a great future of some kind. It is really impossible for me to say much more than this. One poem begins:

'My darling, open now your arms to me,  
Who sore and battered come from history.'

And another:

'Now when not one year's over, my darling, my darling,  
Since we went through our civil ceremony. . . .'

The introduction of the word 'darling' into a poem does not necessarily make it a good poem; often, rather the reverse. All the same, in some of his enthusiastic flights Mr. Moore sometimes hits a good imagery, and, as I say, he has an infectious exuberance. But what principle prevents him from varying the monotony of his lines, from pruning and re-writing? I suppose the answer is that he writes on a typewriter and can't rub out, on account of the three carbon copies, and to save paper.

Mr. Scurfield's poems are those of a good chap, and a character who sees the funny side of things. His humour is brightened up in the surrealist manner, and doubtless, if you were the recipient and at Cambridge, it might be pleasant to receive this sort of thing:

You sat on the sofa, looked at the ceiling,  
Twisted your lip on the rim of a tea cup,  
Blew in the tea, turned your head away  
And let out a belch and a hiccup—

Oxford and Cambridge seem to account for the best and the worst in these poets. Their influence is discernible in the poetry of Fraser, Rook, Waller, and also of Rowse, Nicholas Moore and Scurfield. The moral seems to be that poetically a university education helps a writer when his experience takes him furthest away from his University. It is the writers who linger on at Oxford and Cambridge whose work becomes most abstract and theoretical and removed from real experience. Doubtless Mr. Moore could protest 'My love poems!' But everything that comes directly from Oxford or Cambridge has the air of being done simply to provide a subject for conversation, whether it is

Mr. Moore's sexuality or Mr. Rowse's hate of sex. The anthology of *Eight Oxford Poets* seems to me to bear out these observations. The names of these poets may be worth distinguishing when they have left Oxford. Already Sidney Keyes stands out.

After this, amongst the poets of the new movement, there are various smaller fry, just worth mentioning. Charles Henri Ford, an American, has surrealist charm. *Skail Wind*, by Sydney Smith, is mostly Scots verse, which I can read with interest and pleasure, but find impossible to judge, not knowing whether I am attracted by the poetry or merely by the unfamiliar language. *Westward*, by John Buxton, is a mellifluous poem full of gentlemanly feelings, written from a German prison camp. *Verses of a Fighter Pilot*, by Flying Officer A. N. C. Weir, shows sufficient talent to make us regret the death of the writer (as do also the poems of Timothy Corseilis in *Poems from the Forces*). *Poems from Ulster* contains one or two interesting poems by Alex. Comfort, Robert Greacen and Maurice James Craig. From Eire there come two interesting volumes by Donald Macdonagh and Ewart Milne. These poets represent extremes: Macdonagh of literary Irish writing, Milne of self-consciously political poetry. Both have talent. *Some Poems in Wartime* has five poems by Frederic Prokosch, and one of those 'safe' poems of obsessively fixated factual observation which soured critics write, about pubs, by Julian Symons.

It is rather a relief now to come to a group of older writers. Mr. Richard Church has certainly a very high standard of competence. His poems are often shrewdly observed and strikingly expressed. Reading his book, one is constantly delighted, and admires very much a discipline which is remarkably lacking in the vague shots in the dark of writers like Nicholas Moore. But at the end his poetry suffers from a certain thinness, a tiredness which even his taut metres cannot conceal.

*The North Star* is the best book here by a senior poet, Laurence Binyon, whose work has been far too neglected. His poetry tends towards an excessive tenuousness, as of metal beaten out until it vanishes into thin air, but when he is writing of an experience that comes closer to him, such as illness in 'In Hospital', the poetry has the peculiar kind of power which sometimes comes to a man's later work, as it did with Yeats, and, in a lesser way, Harold Monro.

*Bells and Grass*, by Walter de la Mare, contains some charming



verse, without adding to his reputation, as the poems in a book as recent as *The Fleeting* certainly did; Mr. Geoffrey Faber's *The Buried Stream* is quiet and sympathetic, without being very striking; and Mr. Wilfrid Gibson's *The Alert* is a ghost resuscitated by this war from the Georgian anthologies.

To sum up, no poet of very great individuality has emerged since the middle 'thirties. George Barker and Dylan Thomas still seem to be the most recent poets with definite poetic individualities, though Terence Tiller, Vernon Watkins, G. S. Fraser, G. F. Hendry, and one or two others show great possibilities.

My criticism of these younger poets is that they seem content to surround their lives with all the circumstances of poetry (inspiration, passion, misfortune, adventure, humiliation, etc.), without sufficiently realizing that a poet must be something more than a victim of hallucinatory circumstances. The precarious balancing feat of which being a poet entails is the ability both to hang on to one's origins (not to escape from them into success at the B.B.C., the Ministry, advertising, Hollywood) and at the same time to transcend them. The environment against which the poet rebels is far too valuable a property to lose sight of; at the same time the poetry he writes must not provide a spectacle of his unmitigated defeat by circumstances; rather of his perpetually sustained victory, against great odds.

This may sound an artificial way of stating the position, but it is not so really. 'There is a tide in the affairs of men': all I mean is that other people in life can afford to take the tide at the flood which 'leads on to fortune'. The poet can never afford to be completely fortunate or completely unfortunate, because both involve too great a break in the continuity of his development. The life of a poet who goes on writing good poetry all his life is a bullfight which goes on always. The bull is always there, the matador is always on the point of killing it. Baudelaire's debts, as far as I remember, were never paid, but Baudelaire in his journals and poems always remained a dandy.

After that there come technical problems. Reading through poems from the *Forces*, the poets are sharply divided into those for whom technique exists and those who have no sense of it. Mr.ewart, Mr. Fraser, Mr. Waller, Mr. Alun Lewis, all have a sense that a poem should be *formed*, that even in the freest verse the poet should act as a rein, curbing and checking a runaway line.

There is no such thing as completely free verse. Merely there are two views of the interior order of a poem. One is that the poem should be poured into a mould: the other is that by great concentration on the idea of a poem the poem can create an organic form of its own. Every idea in words has a shape in the mind of the poet, which it is possible to discover and create as a unity. The dangers of relaxed writing are obvious. The careless writer, not having to 'live up' to a form in which past masters have excelled, is able to get away with a medium in which there are no set rules, and which it is difficult for the reader to judge, except by the total impression which the poems produce on the mind. Such writing is difficult to criticize, but I think that by any criterion the writing of Kiedrych Rhys, Nicholas Moore and several other of the younger poets, is of a remarkably low technical standard. This is a pity when the writer is as talented as Mr. Rhys.

In *Daylight*, the new periodical of European arts and letters, edited by John Lehmann, there is an illuminating article translated from *La France Libre*, which incidentally throws much light on the position of writers in England. The article begins with a quotation from a conversation between a French poet and a French novelist. The poet says: 'Poetry demands the whole of one's soul, but there are too many demands on my soul elsewhere.' The novelist replies: 'To my mind a Hugo, a Verlaine, would never have spoken in that way. The sort of exile under which we live would have inspired them, I am sure, seeing what moving poetry exile has produced.' The writer, who overheard this dialogue, after protesting against the use of the word 'exile' to connote Frenchmen in France, comments: 'We must profit by this ordeal to attain a higher degree of personal accomplishment.'

This conversation seems to me to sum up the whole situation of the modern writer in Europe. The problem at the back of the work of the young poets I have been reviewing is that they have lost faith in the validity of their own personal experiences. The war has made them exiles from their own lives, because events of such stupendous significance are happening off the stage, as it were, of their own egos, that they can hardly attend to the drama in which they nevertheless see themselves as the centre. Therefore they show a tendency to develop a kind of split personality in their work. On the one hand they insist vociferously on the significance of the romance in which they are the central actors;

the other hand they occasionally yell out 'Warsaw, Singapore', etc., to show that they are aware of the hideous din going on just outside their own personal theatre. In order to insist on their own experiences to the utmost they also use a private surrealist imagery which can only be understood, as it were, *accidentally*, because, although to the reader it is as obscure as would be a dream in psycho-analysis, it may also seem as significant as a dream in psycho-analysis. Moreover, who knows? This highly personal dream coming direct from the subconscious, just because it comes from such hidden depths, may have a connection with the world outside, the world of Warsaw and Singapore. To complete this picture of the young poet in the armed forces, I must add that he has little time to co-ordinate or revise his experiences, so his rapid transitions from the world of bombers to the world of erotic dreams must also take the form of notes jotted down.

In a recent controversy in *The Listener*, several of the younger poets wrote expressing just this point of view. 'There is no hierarchy of great poets,' wrote one; and another was quoted by a third as saying 'the poet is always a child lost in a labyrinth.' These two remarks are perfectly consistent: for if poets were children lost in labyrinths there certainly would not be any great poets. The lost children of poetry, the Cowpers, the Clares, even the very best, and with their amazing moments of being more far-sighted than the grown-ups) the Blakes and the Hoelders, fail to be great: they can only achieve their moments of greatness, which essentially depend, as do the intuitions of children, on the mental nourishment, the intellectual wholeness and sanity provided by the grown-ups.

Of course it is true that the poet has in him much of the child. But so far from being a lost child who has failed to grow up, he is a grown-up who has found his childhood. Rilke, who is glibly cited as an example of the 'lost child', is exactly the reverse. He is essentially a poet of light that contains darkness, not of darkness that expels light. He sought, with amazing devotion in life and his work, to understand the European tradition and to retain it in his poetry; to understand modern life, including the war and industrialism, and to translate them into terms in which they could be purged by the intelligence of the European tradition; and to perfect his technique. He did not entirely succeed,



because to some extent he fell a victim to his own devotion to poetry, which resulted in a too complete isolation. But, of course, he was right to prefer isolation to becoming a wheel in a machine of mass-produced political or surrealist poetry.

It is difficult to read the poetry of Mr. Moore, Mr. Rhys and his fellow poets in the Forces, and even Mr. Watkins, without feeling that they are choosing too easy a way out. They are certainly not 'profiting by the ordeal to attain a higher degree of personal accomplishment'. If one could describe them roughly as a literary movement, one would say that the impulse of the movement was to abandon the attempt to write major poetry and to substitute for it minor poetry; the poetry of the bewildered victims of circumstances, for the poetry of those who make supreme effort to understand the life around them, and to translate it into imaginative terms which make it assimilable in the mind of other men, relating it to life in the past. For only then can an audience of readers benefit, by feeling that their lives are not completely isolated in the whole stream of life from past to future, but that they can cope with the nightmare of the present because it is a part of the life of the past.

Looking back on the past, at no time have the poets decided that the dream, the image, the nightmare, that comes out of the subconscious, could be handed on to the reader without first being assimilated by the intellect. Shakespeare and Dante would find nothing surprising in the imagery of the surrealists except in the deliberate refusal of the surrealists themselves to understand it. *King Lear* is full of obvious surrealist material, but at no time do you feel that the writer's own intellect has lost grip of his material and that he is simply allowing his mind to pour forth a stream of images which are meaningless to him, in the hope that they may mean something to someone. It seems to me that if the poet considered poetry an emetic rather than a digestive process, it would become a list of symptoms, rather than an effort to understand the illness of the time.

And in order to understand great mental activity is needed: a great deal of reading, an extensive practice of technique, the ability to distinguish between a first draft and a finished product, an interest in life outside poetry, and at the same time the ability to assimilate it into poetry. Rilke roughly indicated the way, for his poems are a prodigious example of the effort to translate

poetic phenomena into terms of poetry, and thus purify them the stream of the imagination, making the transitory and actual accessible to the wisdom of the past. There is indeed a 'hierarchy of great poets', and there is a great need for modern poets to belong to it, because if they can do so they apply the vision of past poets to modern conditions in the light of one continuous imaginative process.

Since beginning this review, Miss Edith Sitwell's new volume of poems, *Street Songs*, has appeared. These seem to me far the best poems she has written. They are immensely strengthened by her deep consciousness of the tragedy of the war, which seems to have confirmed a macabre element in her writing which, though always intense, at times could be artificial. The most beautiful poem in the book seems to me—at a first reading—'Street Song', with its lovely eight opening lines:

'Love my heart for an hour, but my bone for a day—  
At least the skeleton smiles, for it has a morrow:  
But the hearts of the young are now the dark treasure of Death,  
And summer is lonely.

'Comfort the lonely light and the sun in its sorrow,  
Come like the night, for terrible is the sun  
As truth, and the dying light shows only the skeleton's hunger  
For peace, under the flesh like the summer rose.'

More than any other of the poets I have been reviewing, Miss Sitwell seems to have integrated the feeling of the war into her own poetic personality. The highly literary self-consciousness of some of her writing is given a bitter and entirely effective flavour by lines such as these:

'I'll woo you with a serenade—  
The wolfish howls the starving made;  
And lies shall be your canopy  
To shield you from the freezing sky.

'Yet when I clasp you in my arms—  
Who are my sleep, the zero hour  
That clothes, instead of flesh, my heart—  
You in my heaven have no part. . . .'

Miss Sitwell is a curious poet, with monotonous themes and mannerisms which have by now become literary vices:

'The night before great Babylon  
 Fell like the summer rain,  
 Under the great grey towers of the apple trees  
 Voices sounded again.'

Babylon falling like rain, towers of apple trees, voices sounding again, these are just ingrained habits of words in Miss Sitwell's poetry. Moreover, the *thinking* quality of her poetry is weak; and this is what makes her grasp of her material so uncertain, even when she is such a skilful and self-conscious technician. But if she does not think, a certain obsessive habit of mind, sometimes artificial, sometimes ghostly, sometimes beautiful and sometimes despairing, grows on and finally convinces one. A poem begins

'In the summer when no one is cold  
 And the country roads seem of hot gold,  
 'While the air seems a draught of white wine  
 Where all day long golden stars shine,—  
 'And the sun is a world of red meat  
 For those who have nothing to eat—'

This is all very good of its kind, though one may not quite trust the kind. Then suddenly she strikes what seems to me a new and deeper note in her poetry—deeper even than her constant obsession with death:

'I walk the world, envying the roads  
 That have somewhere to go, that bear loads  
 'Of happiness, business and sorrow,  
 And the rose that cares not for tomorrow.'

These lines seem to me extremely beautiful, as is the wonderfully developed image of the shadow at the end of the poem.

Edith Sitwell in these poems, T. S. Eliot in *East Coker* and *The Dry Salvages*, and Robert Graves in some recent poems, are all writing their best work. Perhaps it is significant that they are all poets who have written through two wars, and the period between wars, without losing their integrity. They are now reaping the fruit of their long devotion to poetry, and also of the comparative leisure and time for study which the accident of their time of life allows them. One cannot blame the young writers for leading hustled and bullied lives, but if their poetry is to develop twenty years after this war, as that of some older



writers has done now, it is important for criticism at least to maintain a sense of values, and to insist on the conditions and attitude of mind within which poetry can be and has been written.

## SOME POETRY PUBLISHED RECENTLY

- Street Songs*, by Edith Sitwell (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.)  
*Poems*, by Terence Tiller (Hogarth Press, 2s. 6d.)  
*Ballad of the Mari Lwyd*, by Vernon Watkins (Faber, 6s.)  
*The North Star*, by Laurence Binyon (Macmillan, 4s.)  
*Shapes and Sounds 1941*, by Mervyn Peake (Chatto, 4s. 6d.)  
*Veterans and Other Poems*, by Donald MacDonagh (Cuala Press, 6s.)  
*Poems of a Decade*, by A. L. Rowse (Faber, 6s.)  
*Escapes*, by Francis Scarfe (The Fortune Press, 6s.)  
*The Buried Stream*, by Geoffrey Faber (Faber, 7s. 6d.)  
*Dream Observed*, by Ann Ridler (Poetry, 1s.)  
*The Song of a Red Turtle*, by George Scurfield (P.L. Pamphlets, 1s.)  
*Buzzing Around with a Bee*, by Nicholas Moore (P.L. Pamphlets, 1s.)  
*No Other Choice*, by Ursula Wood (Shakespeare Head Press, 5s.)  
*Esten Mangan*, by Ewart Milne (Sign of Three Candles, Dublin, 5s.)  
*Tomorrow is a Revealing*, by Lilian Bowes-Lyon (Cape, 3s. 6d.)  
*Mail Wind*, by Sydney Smith (The Chalmers Press, 3s.)  
*Verses of a Fighter Pilot*, by A. N. C. Weir (Faber, 5s.)  
*London Watches*, by 'Sagittarius' (Cape, 2s. 6d.)  
*O.S. Ludlow*, by Christopher Hassall (Cape, 5s.)  
*The Solitary Man*, by Richard Church (Dent, 7s. 6d.)  
*Hills and Grass*, by Walter de la Mare (Faber, 7s. 6d.)  
*Presias and Other Poems*, by R. N. Currey (Oxford, 5s.)  
*Be Alert*, by Wilfrid Gibson (Oxford, 3s. 6d.)  
*Pollyon*, by George Rostrevor Hamilton (Heinemann, 3s. 6d.)  
*The Rude Potato*, by Ruth Pitter (Cresset Press, 5s.)  
*Westward*, by John Buxton (Cape, 2s. 6d.)  
*Poems from the Forces* (Routledge, 6s.), edited by Kiedrich Rhys. Preface by Walter Elliott  
*Poems in Wartime* (Diener and Reynolds, 1s.). Edited by Julian Symons  
*Poems from Ulster* (Belfast, 1s.). Edited by Erskine Mayo.

## GEORGE ORWELL

## RUDYARD KIPLING

It was a pity that Mr. Eliot should be so much on the defensive in the long essay with which he prefaces this selection of Kipling's poetry,<sup>1</sup> but it was not to be avoided, because before one can even read *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*, made by T. S. Eliot. (Faber & Faber 8s. 6d.)

to speak about Kipling one has to clear away a legend that has been created by two sets of people who have not read his works. Kipling is in the peculiar position of having been a by-word for fifty years. During five literary generations every enlightened person has despised him, and at the end of that time nine-tenths of those enlightened persons are forgotten and Kipling is in some sense still there. Mr. Eliot never satisfactorily explains this fact, because in answering the shallow and familiar charge that Kipling is a 'Fascist' he falls into the opposite error of defending him where he is not defensible. It is no use pretending that Kipling's view of life, as a whole, can be accepted or even forgiven by any civilized person. It is no use claiming, for instance, that when Kipling describes a British soldier beating a 'nigger' with a cleaning rod in order to get money out of him, he is acting merely as a reporter and does not necessarily approve what he describes. There is not the slightest sign anywhere in Kipling's work that he disapproves of that kind of conduct—on the contrary, there is a definite strain of sadism in him, over and above the brutality which a writer of that type has to have. Kipling is a jingo imperialist, he is morally insensitive and æsthetically disgusting. It is better to start by admitting that and then to try to find out why it is that he survives while the refined people who have sniggered at him seem to wear so badly.

And yet the 'Fascist' charge has to be answered, because the first clue to any understanding of Kipling, morally or politically, is the fact that he was *not* a Fascist. He was further from being one than the most humane or the most 'progressive' person is able to be nowadays. An interesting instance of the way in which quotations are parroted to and fro without any attempt to look up their context or discover their meaning is the line from *Recessional* 'Lesser breeds without the Law'. This line is always good for a snigger in pansy-left circles. It is assumed as a matter of course that the 'lesser breeds' are 'natives', and a mental picture is called up of some pukka sahib in a pith helmet kicking a coolie. In its context the sense of the line is almost the exact opposite of this. The phrase 'lesser breeds' refers almost certainly to the Germans, and especially the pan-German writers, who are 'without the Law' in the sense of being lawless, not in the sense of being powerless. The whole poem, conventionally thought of as an orgy of boasting, is a denunciation of power politics, British and

ell as German. Two stanzas are worth quoting (I am quoting  
is as politics, not as poetry):

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose  
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,  
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,  
Or lesser breeds without the Law—  
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust  
In reeking tube and iron shard,  
All valiant dust that builds on dust,  
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,  
For frantic boast and foolish word—  
Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!

much of Kipling's phraseology is taken from the Bible, and  
doubt in the second stanza he had in mind the text from  
alm cxxvii: 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain  
at build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh  
it in vain.' It is not a text that makes much impression on the  
st-Hitler mind. No one, in our time, believes in any sanction  
reater than military power; no one believes that it is possible to  
ercome force except by greater force. There is no 'law', there  
only power. I am not saying that that is a true belief, merely  
at it is the belief which all modern men do actually hold. Those  
no pretend otherwise are either intellectual cowards, or power-  
orshippers under a thin disguise, or have simply not caught up  
th the age they are living in. Kipling's outlook is pre-Fascist.  
still believes that pride comes before a fall and the gods punish  
pris. He does not foresee the tank, the bombing plane, the radio  
d the secret police, or their psychological results.

But in saying this, does not one unsay what I said above about  
Kipling's jingoism and brutality? No, one is merely saying that  
nineteenth-century imperialist outlook and the modern  
ngster outlook are two different things. Kipling belongs very  
nitely to the period 1885-1902. The Great War and its after-  
th embittered him, but he shows little sign of having learned  
othing from any event later than the Boer War. He was the  
phet of British Imperialism in its expansionist phase (even



more than his poems, his solitary novel, *The Light that Failed* (which gives you the atmosphere of that time) and also the unofficial historian of the British army, the old mercenary army which began to change its shape in 1914. All his confidence, his bouncing vulgar vitality, sprang out of limitations which no Fascist or near-Fascist shares.

Kipling spent the later part of his life in sulking, and no doubt it was political disappointment rather than literary vanity that accounted for this. Somehow history had not gone according to plan. After the greatest victory she had ever known, Britain was a lesser world power than before, and Kipling was quite acute enough to see this. The virtue had gone out of the classes he idealised, the young were hedonistic or disaffected, the desire to paint the map red had evaporated. He could not understand what was happening, because he had never had any grasp of the economic forces underlying imperial expansion. It is notable that Kipling does not seem to realize, any more than the average soldier or colonial administrator, that an empire is primarily a money-making concern. Imperialism as he sees it is a sort of forcible evangelising. You turn a Gatling gun on a mob of unarmed 'natives', and then you establish 'the Law', which includes roads, railways and a court-house. He could not foresee, therefore, that the same motives which brought the Empire into existence would end by destroying it. It was the same motive for example, that caused the Malayan jungles to be cleared for rubber estates, and which now causes those estates to be handed over intact to the Japanese. The modern totalitarians know what they are doing, and the nineteenth-century English did not know what they were doing. Both attitudes have their advantages, but Kipling was never able to move forward from one into the other. His outlook, allowing for the fact that after all he was an artist, was that of the salaried bureaucrat who despises the 'box-wallah' and often lives a lifetime without realizing that the 'box-wallah' calls the tune.

But because he identifies himself with the official class, he does not possess one thing which 'enlightened' people seldom or never possess, and that is a sense of responsibility. The middle-class Left hate him for this quite as much as for his cruelty and vulgarity. All left-wing parties in the highly industrialized countries are at bottom a sham, because they make it their business to fight

against something which they do not really wish to destroy. They have internationalist aims, and at the same time they struggle to keep up a standard of life with which those aims are incompatible. We all live by robbing Asiatic coolies, and those of us who are 'enlightened' all maintain that those coolies ought to be set free; at our standard of living, and hence our 'enlightenment', demands that the robbery shall continue. A humanitarian is always a hypocrite, and Kipling's understanding of this is perhaps the central secret of his power to create telling phrases. It would be difficult to hit off the one-eyed pacifism of the English in fewer words than in the phrase 'making mock of uniforms that guard you while you sleep'. It is true that Kipling does not understand the economic aspect of the relationship between the highbrow and the blimp. He does not see that the map is painted red chiefly in order that the coolie may be exploited. Instead of the coolie he sees the Indian Civil Servant; but even on that plane his grasp of function, of who protects whom, is very sound. He sees clearly that men can only be highly civilized while other men, inevitably less civilized, are there to guard and feed them.

How far does Kipling really identify himself with the administrators, soldiers and engineers whose praises he sings? Not so completely as is sometimes assumed. He had travelled very widely while he was still a young man, he had grown up with a brilliant and in mainly philistine surroundings, and some streak in him that may have been partly neurotic led him to prefer the active man to the sensitive man. The nineteenth-century Anglo-Indians, to name the least sympathetic of his idols, were at any rate people who did things. It may be that all that they did was to rule, but they changed the face of the earth (it is instructive to look at a map of Asia and compare the railway system of India with that of the surrounding countries), whereas they could have achieved nothing, could not have maintained themselves in power for a single week, if the normal Anglo-Indian outlook had been that of, say, E. M. Forster. Tawdry and shallow though it is, Kipling's is the only literary picture that we possess of nineteenth-century Anglo-India, and he could only make it because he was coarse enough to be able to exist and keep his mouth shut in clubs and regimental messes. But he did not greatly resemble the people he admired. I know from several private sources that many of the Anglo-Indians who were Kipling's contemporaries did not

like or approve of him. They said, no doubt truly, that he knew nothing about India, and on the other hand he was from their point of view too much of a highbrow. While in India he tended to mix with 'the wrong' people, and because of his dark complexion he was wrongly suspected of having a streak of Asiatic blood. Much in his development is traceable to his having been born in India and having left school early. With a slightly different background he might have been a good novelist or a superlative writer of music-hall songs. But how true is it that he was a vulgar flag-waver, a sort of publicity agent for Cecil Rhodes? It is true, but it is not true that he was a yes-man or a time-server. After his early days, if then, he never courted public opinion. Mr. Eliot says that what is held against him is that he expressed unpopular views in a popular style. This narrows the issue by assuming that 'unpopular' means unpopular with the intelligentsia, but it is a fact that Kipling's 'message' was one that the big public did not want, and, indeed, has never accepted. The mass of the people, in the 'nineties as now, were anti-militarist, bored by the Empire, and only unconsciously patriotic. Kipling's official admirers are and were the 'service' middle-class, the people who read *Blackwood's*. In the stupid early years of this century, the blimps, having at last discovered someone who could be called a poet and who was on their side, set Kipling on a pedestal, and some of his more sententious poems, such as *If*, were given almost biblical status. But it is doubtful whether the blimps have ever read him with attention, any more than they have read the Bible. Much of what he says they could not possibly approve. Few people who have criticized England from the inside have said bitterer things about her than this gutter patriot. As a rule it is the British working-class that he is attacking but not always. That phrase about 'the flannelled fools at the wicket and the muddled oafs at the goal' sticks like an arrow to this day, and it is aimed at the Eton and Harrow match as well as at the Cup-Tie Final. Some of the verses he wrote about the Boer War have a curiously modern ring, so far as their subject-matter goes. *Stellenbosch*, which must have been written about 1902, sums up what every intelligent infantry officer was saying in 1918, or is saying now, for that matter.

Kipling's romantic ideas about England and the Empire might not have mattered if he could have held them without having the



ass prejudices which at that time went with them. If one examines his best and most representative work, his soldier poems, especially *Barrack Room Ballads*, one notices that what more than anything else spoils them is an underlying air of patronage. Kipling idealizes the army officer, especially the junior officer, and that to an idiotic extent, but the private soldier, though shrewd and romantic, has to be a comic. He is always made to speak in a sort of stylised cockney, not very broad but with all the aitches and final g's carefully omitted. Very often the result is as embarrassing as the humorous recitation at a Church social. And this accounts for the curious fact that one can often improve Kipling's poems, make them less facetious and less blatant, by simply going through them and translating them from cockney to standard speech. This is especially true of his refrains, which often have a truly lyrical quality. Two examples will do (one is about a funeral and the other about a wedding):

So it's knock out your pipes and follow me!  
And it's finish up your swipes and follow me!  
Oh, hark to the big drum calling,  
Follow me—follow me home!

And again:

Cheer for the Sergeant's wedding—  
Give them one cheer more!  
Grey gun-horses in the lando,  
And a rogue is married to a whore!

Here I have restored the aitches, etc. Kipling ought to have known better. He ought to have seen that the two closing lines of the last of these stanzas are very beautiful lines, and that ought to have overridden his impulse to make fun of a working man's accent. In the ancient ballads the lord and the peasant speak the same language. This is impossible to Kipling, who is looking down a distorting class-perspective, and by a piece of poetic justice one of his best lines is spoiled—for 'follow me 'ome' is much uglier than 'follow me home'. But even where it makes no difference musically the facetiousness of his stage cockney dialect is irritating. However, he is more often quoted aloud than read from the printed page, and most people instinctively make the necessary alterations when they quote him.

Can one imagine any private soldier, in the 'nineties or now, singing *Barrack Room Ballads* and feeling that here was a writer

who spoke for him? It is very hard to do so. Any soldier capable of reading a book of verse would notice at once that Kipling is almost unconscious of the class war that goes on in an army as much as anywhere else. It is not only that he thinks the soldier comic, but that he thinks him patriotic, feudal, a ready admirer of his officers and proud to be a soldier of the Queen. Of course that is partly true, or battles could not be fought, but 'What have you done for thee, England, my England?' is essentially a middle-class query. Almost any working man would follow it up immediately with 'What has England done for me?' In so far as Kipling grasps this he simply sets it down to 'the intense selfishness of the lower classes' (his own phrase). When he is writing not of British but of 'loyal' Indians he carries the 'Salaam, sahib' motif to sometimes disgusting lengths. Yet it remains true that he has far more interest in the common soldier, far more anxiety that he shall get a fair deal than most of the 'liberals' of his day or our own. He sees that the soldier is neglected, meanly underpaid and hypocritically despised by the people whose incomes he safeguards. 'I came to realize', he says in his posthumous memoirs, 'the bare horrors of the private's life, and the unnecessary torments he endured.' He is accused of glorifying war, and perhaps he does so, but not in the usual manner, by pretending that war is a sort of football match. Like most people capable of writing battle poetry Kipling had never been in battle, but his vision of war is realistic. He knows that bullets hurt, that under fire everyone is terrified, that the ordinary soldier never knows what the war is about or what is happening except in his own corner of the battlefield, and that British troops, like other troops, frequently run away:

I 'eard the knives be'ind me, but I dursn't face my man,  
Nor I don't know where I went to, 'cause I didn't stop to see,  
Till I 'eard a beggar squealin' out for quarter as 'e ran,  
An' I thought I knew the voice an'—it was me!

Modernize the style of this, and it might have come out one of the debunking war books of the nineteen-twenties. Or again:

An' now the hugly bullets come peckin' through the dust  
An' no one wants to face 'em, but every beggar must;  
So, like a man in irons, which isn't glad to go,  
They moves 'em off by companies uncommon stiff an' slow.

compare this with:

Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Was there a man dismayed?  
No! though the soldier knew  
Someone had blundered.

anything Kipling overdoes the horrors, for the wars of his youth were hardly wars at all by our standards. Perhaps that is due to the neurotic strain in him, the hunger for cruelty. But at least he knows that men ordered to attack impossible objectives were dismayed, and also that fourpence a day is not a generous pension.

How complete or truthful a picture has Kipling left us of the fighting-service, mercenary army of the late nineteenth century? One must say of this, as of what Kipling wrote about nineteenth-century Anglo-India, that it is not only the best but almost the only literary picture we have. He has put on record an immense amount of stuff that one could otherwise only gather from verbal tradition or from unreadable regimental histories. Perhaps his picture of army life seems fuller and more accurate than it is because any middle-class English person is likely to know enough to fill up the gaps. At any rate, reading the essay on Kipling that Mr. Edmund Wilson has just published or is just about to publish, I was struck by the number of things that are boringly familiar to us and seem to be barely intelligible to an American. But from the body of Kipling's early work there does seem to emerge a vivid and not seriously misleading picture of the old pre-machine-gun army—the sweltering barracks in Gibraltar or Lucknow, the red coats, the pipeclayed belts and the pillbox hats, the beer, the floggings, hangings and crucifixions, the bugle calls, the smell of oats and horse-piss, the bellowing sergeants with pot-long moustaches, the bloody skirmishes, invariably misnamed, the crowded troopships, the cholera-stricken camps, the 'native' concubines, the ultimate death in the workhouse. It is a crude, vulgar picture, in which a patriotic music-hall turn seems to have got mixed up with one of Zola's gorier passages, but from it future generations will be able to gather some idea of what a long-term volunteer army was like. On about the same level they will be able to learn something of British India in the days when motor-cars and refrigerators were unheard of. It is an error



to imagine that we might have had better books on these subjects if, for example, George Moore, or Gissing, or Thomas Hardy had had Kipling's opportunities. That is the kind of accident that cannot happen. It was not possible that nineteenth-century England should produce a book like *War and Peace*, or like Tolstoy's minor stories of army life, such as *Sebastopol* or *The Cossacks*, not because the talent was necessarily lacking but because no one with sufficient sensitiveness to write such books would ever have made the appropriate contacts. Tolstoy lived in a great military empire in which it seemed natural for almost any young man of family to spend a few years in the army, whereas the British Empire was and still is demilitarized to a degree which Continental observers find almost incredible. Civilized men do not readily move away from the centres of civilization, and in most languages there is a great dearth of what one might call colonial literature. It took a very improbable combination of circumstances to produce Kipling's gaudy tableau, in which Private Ortheris and Mrs. Hauksbee pose against a background of palm trees to the sound of temple bells, and one necessary circumstance was that Kipling himself was only half civilized.

Kipling is the only English writer of our time who has added phrases to the language. The phrases and neologisms which we take over and use without remembering their origin do not always come from writers we admire. It is strange, for instance, to hear the Nazi broadcasters referring to the Russian soldiers as 'robots', thus unconsciously borrowing a word from a Czech democrat whom they would have killed if they could have laid hands on him. Here are a half a dozen phrases coined by Kipling which one sees quoted in leaderettes in the gutter press or overhears in saloon bars from people who have barely heard his name. It will be seen that they all have a certain characteristic in common:

East is East and West is West.

The white man's burden.

What do they know of England who only England know?

The female of the species is more deadly than the male.

Somewhere East of Suez.

Paying the Dane-geld.

There are various others, including some that have outlived their context by many years. The phrase 'killing Kruger with your mouth', for instance, was current till very recently. It is also



ADELPHI

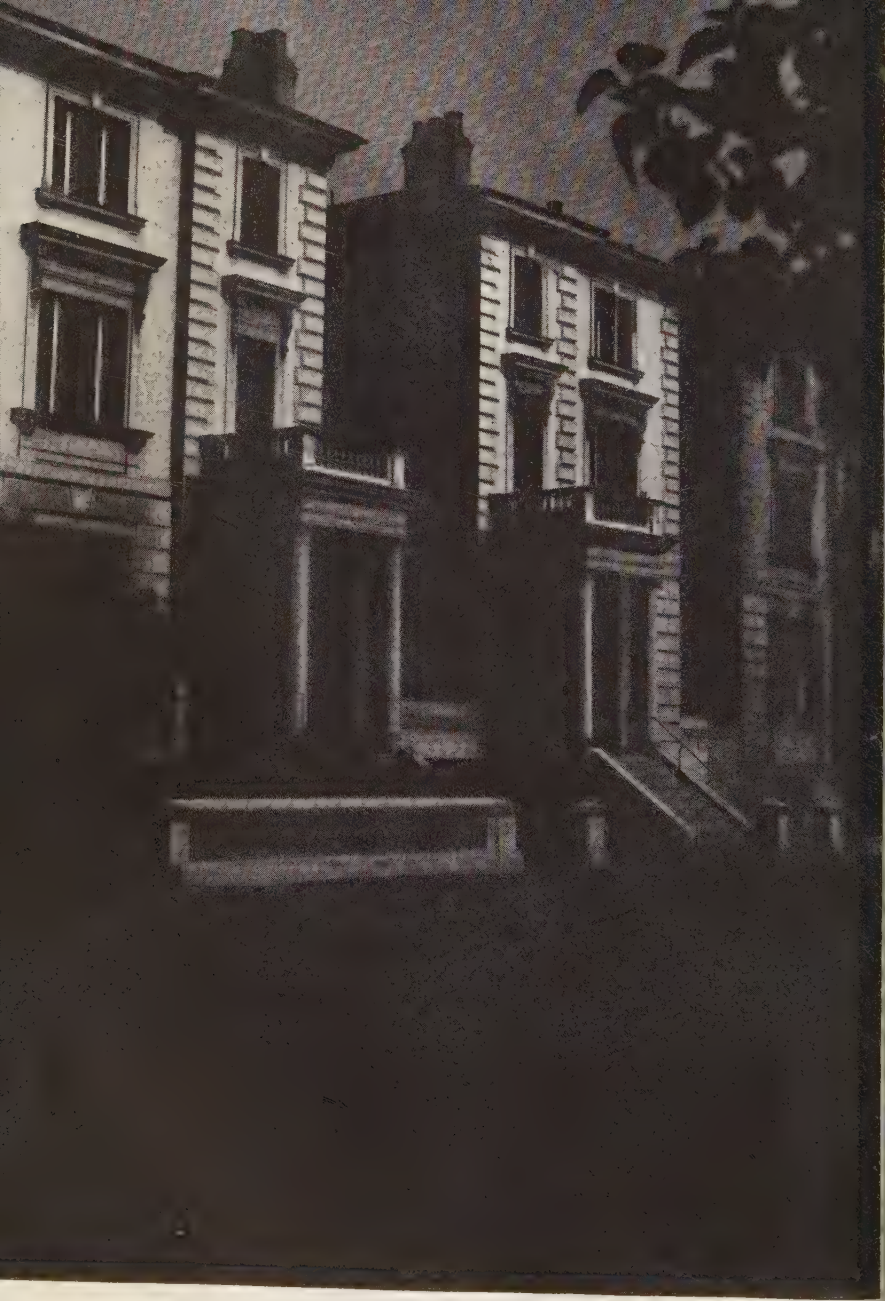
LONDON NIGHT, BY BILL BRANDT



CRYPT SHELTER







HAMPSTEAD

possible that it was Kipling who first let loose the use of the word 'Huns' for Germans; at any rate he began using it as soon as the guns opened fire in 1914. But what the phrases I have listed above have in common is that they are all of them phrases which one enters semi-derisively (as it might be 'For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May'), but which one is bound to make use of sooner or later. Nothing could exceed the attempt of the *New Statesman*, for instance, for Kipling, but how many times during the Munich period did the *New Statesman* find itself quoting that phrase about paying the Dane-geld? The fact is that Kipling, apart from his snack-bar wisdom and his gift for packing much cheap picturesqueness into a few words (Calm and Pine—East of Suez—The Road to Mandalay), is generally talking about things that are of urgent interest. It does not matter, from this point of view, that thinking and decent people generally find themselves on the other side of the fence from him. 'White man's burden' instantly conjures up a real problem, even if one feels that it ought to be altered to 'black man's burden'. One may disagree to the middle of one's bones with the political attitude implied in *The Islanders*, but one cannot deny that it is a frivolous attitude. Kipling deals in thoughts which are both vulgar and permanent. This raises the question of his special status as a poet, or verse-writer.

Mr. Eliot describes Kipling's metrical work as 'verse' and not 'poetry', but adds that it is 'great verse', and further qualifies this by saying that a writer can only be described as a 'great verse writer' if there is some of his work 'of which we cannot say whether it is verse or poetry'. Apparently Kipling was a versifier who occasionally wrote poems, in which case it was a pity that Mr. Eliot did not specify these poems by name. The trouble is that whenever an æsthetic judgment on Kipling's work seems to be called for, Mr. Eliot is too much on the defensive to be able to speak plainly. What he does not say, and what I think one ought to start by saying in any discussion of Kipling, is that most of Kipling's verse is so horribly vulgar that it gives one the same sensation as one gets from watching a third-rate music-hall performer recite *The Pigtail of Wu Fang Fu* with the purple limelight on his face, and yet there is much of it that is capable of giving pleasure to people who know what poetry means. At his worst, and also his most vital, in poems like *Gunga Din* or *Danny Deever*,



Kipling is almost a shameful pleasure, like the taste for cheap sweets that some people secretly carry into middle life. But even with his best passages one has the same sense of being seduced by something spurious, and yet unquestionably seduced. Unless one is merely a snob and liar it is impossible to say that no one who cares for poetry could get any pleasure out of such lines as

For the wind is in the palm trees, and the temple bells they say,  
 'Come you back, you British soldier, come you back to  
 Mandalay!'

and yet those lines are not poetry in the same sense as *Felix Randall*, or 'When icicles hang by the wall' are poetry. One can, perhaps, place Kipling more satisfactorily than by juggling with the words 'verse' and 'poetry', if one describes him simply as a good bad poet. He is as a poet what Harriet Beecher Stowe was as a novelist. And the mere existence of work of this kind, which is perceived by generation after generation to be vulgar and yet goes on being read, tells one something about the age we live in.

There is a great deal of good bad poetry in English, all of it, I should say, subsequent to 1790. Examples of good bad poems—I am deliberately choosing diverse ones—are *The Bridge of Sighs*, *When all the world is young, lad*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, Bret Harte's *Dickens in Camp*, *The Burial of Sir John Moore*, *Jenny kissed me*, *Keith of Ravelston*, *Casabianca*. All of these reek of sentimentality, and yet—not these particular poems, perhaps, but poems of this kind, are capable of giving true pleasure to people who can see clearly what is wrong with them. One could fill a fair-sized anthology with good bad poems, if it were not for the significant fact that good bad poetry is usually too well known to be worth reprinting. It is no use pretending that in an age like our own 'good' poetry can have any genuine popularity. It is and must be the cult of a very few people, the least tolerated of the arts. Perhaps that statement needs a certain amount of qualification. True poetry can sometimes be acceptable to the mass of the people when it disguises itself as something else. One can see an example of this in the folk poetry that England still possesses, certain nursery rhymes and mnemonic rhymes, for instance, and the songs that soldiers make up, including the words that go to some of the bugle calls. But in general ours is a civilization

in which the very word 'poetry' evokes a hostile snigger or, at best, the sort of frozen disgust that most people feel when they hear the word 'God'. If you are good at playing the concertina you could probably go into the nearest public bar and get yourself an appreciative audience within five minutes. But what would be the attitude of that same audience if you suggested reading them Shakespeare's sonnets, for instance? Good bad poetry, however, can get across to the most unpromising audiences if the right atmosphere has been worked up beforehand. Some months back Churchill produced a great effect by quoting Clough's *Endeavour* in one of his broadcast speeches. I listened to this speech among people who could certainly not be accused of caring for poetry, and I am convinced that the lapse into verse impressed them and did not embarrass them. But not even Churchill could have got away with it if he had quoted anything much better than this.

In so far as a writer of verse can be popular, Kipling has been and probably still is popular. In his own lifetime some of his poems travelled far beyond the bounds of the reading public, beyond the world of school prize-days, Boy Scout sing-songs, lamp-leather editions, pokerwork and calendars, and out into the yet vaster world of the music-halls. Nevertheless Mr. Eliot thinks it worth while to edit him, thus confessing to a taste which others are but are not always honest enough to mention. The fact that such a thing as good bad poetry can exist is a sign of the notional overlap between the intellectual and the ordinary man. The intellectual is different from the ordinary man, but only in certain sections of his personality, and even then not all the time. But what is the peculiarity of a good bad poem? A good bad poem is a graceful monument to the obvious. It records in memorable form—for verse is a mnemonic device, among other things—some emotion which very nearly every human being can share. The merit of a poem like 'When all the world is young, I', is that however sentimental it may be, its sentiment is 'true' in the sense that you are bound to find yourself thinking the thought it expresses sooner or later; and then, if you happen to reread the poem, it will come back into your mind and seem better than it did before. Such poems are a kind of rhyming proverb, and it is a fact that definitely popular poetry is usually comic or sententious. One example from Kipling will do:

White hands cling to the bridle rein,  
Slipping the spur from the booted heel;  
Tenderest voices cry 'Turn again!'  
Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel:  
Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne,  
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

There is a vulgar thought vigorously expressed. It may not be true, but at any rate it is a thought that everyone thinks. Sooner or later you will have occasion to feel that he travels the fastest who travels alone, and there the thought is readymade and, as it were, waiting for you. So the chances are that, having once heard this line, you will remember it.

One reason for Kipling's power as a good bad poet I have already suggested—his sense of responsibility, which made it possible for him to have a world-view, even though it happened to be a false one. Although he had no direct connection with any political party, Kipling was a Conservative, a thing that does not exist nowadays. Those who now call themselves Conservatives are either Liberals, Fascists or the accomplices of Fascists. He identified himself with the ruling power and not with the opposition. In a gifted writer this seems to us strange and even disgusting, but it did have the advantage of giving Kipling a certain grip on reality. The ruling power is always faced with the question 'In such and such circumstances, what would you *do*?', whereas the opposition is not obliged to take responsibility or make any real decisions. Where it is a permanent and pensioned opposition, as in England, the quality of its thought deteriorates accordingly. Moreover, anyone who starts out with a pessimistic, reactionary view of life tends to be justified by events, for Utopia never arrives and 'the gods of the copybook headings', as Kipling himself put it, always return. Kipling sold out to the British governing class, not financially but emotionally. This warped his political judgment, for the British ruling class were not what he imagined, and it led him into abysses of folly and snobbery, but he gained a corresponding advantage from having at least tried to imagine what action and responsibility are like. It is a great thing in his favour that he is not witty, not 'daring', has no wish to *épater les bourgeois*. He dealt largely in platitudes, and since we live in a world of platitudes, much of what he said sticks. Even his worst



politics seem less shallow and less irritating than the 'enlightened' utterances of the same period, such as Wilde's epigrams or the collection of cracker-mottoes at the end of *Man and Superman*.

## AUGUSTUS JOHN

# FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—VI

SOJOURN at Ste Honorine-sur-Mer, near Bayeux, was memorable for little save the birth of my son Romilly and the rival in the district of a band of Piedmontese Gypsies. An impression of these last I have embodied in a cartoon entitled 'Wandering Sinti'. It might have been a year later when I found myself and family in Cherbourg. It was here that I made my first contact with the 'Coppersmiths', who were now beginning their migration from Eastern Europe and whom I was to see so much later. My first records of their vocabulary, songs and tales, appeared in *The Gypsy Lore Journal* and were followed by further extensive researches, by me and others, into the dialect, folklore and customs of this widely wandering tribe.

'Travelling by 'Diligence' (surely the last surviving example of this form of conveyance) through the Jean François Millet country we reached the village of Dielette and established ourselves for the summer.

A small circus arriving at the same time, I quickly made the acquaintance of its personnel. The patriarch, one Nicholas, rising, especially excited my interest. In spite of the disparity of our ages, we discovered much in common. Though the practice of this handsome old man of questing alms with an air of exaggerated humility embarrassed me, once his purpose effected he instantly recovered his natural dignity and with great coolness could invest his takings in a bottle or two of wine, sharing it with me before the eyes of his late benefactors, while discussing 'Fairs of Egypt' in a frank and open way not commonly displayed before a *Gajo*. Upon his departure we made a rendezvous,

Rue Picpus, Paris, which was never kept. Instead I made a new friend in the person of Horace de Vere Cole. Him I met at the luxurious apartment of a gifted Bostonian, Royall Tyler, to whom I had been introduced by Henry Lamb. This meeting inaugurated an intimacy which lasted with intervals for years. There were present also Fabian de Castro, Gypsy guitarist and painter, Tudor Castle and Lyulph Howard, commonly called 'Dummer'. Tyler, who was a profound student of Spain and, as they say, '*muy aficionado*', produced at the same time the celebrated artists La Macarona and El Faico, and from them I gained my first acquaintance with the Flamenco tradition of music and dancing. The intricate rhythms of its various musical forms, and especially that style known as '*cante xondo*', or deep song (always described by Fabian as '*fatal*'), seemed to stir up strange undercurrents of anguish, longing and regret. The harsh outcry of the singers, rising convulsively from the bowels, merged with the insistent thrumming of strings into a heart-breaking ululation, suggesting the lamentations of beings thrust out of heaven, or even our common lot (for what unimaginable delinquency?), and debarred for ever from all tenderness and hope; all but the hunger, the bitter passion and irony of the damned. The dances, on the other hand, illustrated with superb precision the pride, the power and the glory of the flesh.

Horace de Vere Cole was at this time in his prime. The great practical-joker joined to the façade of a debonair Anglo-Irish gentleman the necessary corollary of an ample fortune. A plentiful crop of white, but by no means venerable locks, crowned his almost classic headpiece, which was furnished in addition with a pair of chevaleresque and upstanding moustaches. The lower part of his face, less pure in outline than the nose and brow, was kept carefully under control. The fine blue eyes, when not dimmed in languor, shone with malice and self-assurance. Dressed like a milord he strode magnificently along the Boulevard, at any moment prepared to indulge in some wild prank. No practical-joker myself, I would have preferred to watch these activities at a distance. It was disconcerting to find myself to be, without warning, in charge of an epileptic undergoing convulsions on the pavement and foaming at the mouth; or to be involved suddenly in a collision between a whooping madman and an unknown, bewildered but choleric bourgeois gentleman

prived suddenly of his headgear and who had all my sympathy. I tried to use grace to say he was at war with pomposity, but I have never known a Frenchman of any type to respond to his brand of humour with anything but distaste or hostility.

Our adventures continued in London, where we had now returned. One day when alone in the house at Church Street the bell rang. Opening the front door I found myself confronted with a lady, who, wreathed in smiles and with a foreign accent, inquired the whereabouts of Percy Wyndham Lewis. Having informed her as best I could, the lady, though uninvited, entered and with the greatest good nature made herself at home. This was Mde Strindberg, the third (and last) wife of the poet. An Austrian ('one of the von Uhls'), she had had some literary dealings with Lewis, who had unaccountably disappeared. Always an amateur of intellect she was anxious to trace and befriend a man of Lewis's notable intellectual calibre. The conversation (on my side but halting) turning to the subject of Art, Mde Strindberg expressed a keen interest in my efforts and her desire to acquire some examples of them. She left, finally, with every demonstration of goodwill and a promise to revisit me at an early date. As a matter of fact, I hoped she wouldn't, as I dislike doing my own shop-work, and I had referred her to my dealer. When I next saw Lewis and told him of this encounter, he showed signs of the greatest agitation, and made me swear not to reveal the address of his new lodging, saying that while Mde Strindberg was 'an admirable woman' he was for certain reasons unwilling to continue his (purely literary) relations with that lady. I then dismissed the incident from my mind, but it turned out to be the prelude to a long and by no means idyllic tale of misdirected energy, mad incomprehension, absurdity and even squalor.

We had now removed from Chelsea to Dorset; having found a convenient home off the Ringwood Road, near Parkstone. Alcnancy Manor consisted of a one-floor building with Gothic windows and a good cellar. Furnished with crenellations on the front side, the others had been by some oversight left unfortified. A cottage (somewhat larger than the house) made a useful annex, and it was here I had my studio, a converted coach-house. Two vans provided additional accommodation, and a considerable range of heath and woodland surrounded us.

In obedience to the recurrent call of far-off Roman trumpets,



at last, one early spring, I set out alone to discover the classic land of Provence. Descending at Avignon, I lingered awhile in the walled city of the Popes, wandering as in a dream beneath the ramparts. Across the Rhone and the island of the Barthelasse, the white town of Villeneuve-les-Avignon looked like an illumination in a missal. In the distance *Le Ventoux* unexpectedly raised its creamy dome. At first I thought it was snow-covered. '*Laço dive* (good-day)', I remarked to a Gypsy girl who passed; '*Ker'la ši* (it's cold),' she replied in her beautiful dialect, supposed by the learned to be long extinct. The Pope's Palace rose straight and 'functional' like a noble phalanstery. I admired the fragmentary frescoes of Simone Martini within it. I drank wine with '*Le Marseillais*', a humorous peripatetic of my acquaintance; explored tenebrous byways where old women beckoned the passer-by to an equivocal hospitality; made friends with '*maquignons*' and did no work. I went on to Arles.

Arles, once the capital of Provence and in earlier times a Greek colony and then a Gallo-Roman town, has been celebrated for the beauty of its women. Occasionally one still sees a pure type, though the influx of Belgian workmen employed in building the railway resulted in a modification of the famous classic features. The costume, once so gay and various, has long been reduced to a sober uniformity of black and white *coiffe*, silk scarf, stays, and a long trailing skirt, affected principally by the old women. On special occasions the young ones get out the rich old garments and parade to the sound of *fifre* and *tambour*. Their great hats of golden straw were carried not on the head but strapped over the buttocks. A frightful statue of Frederic Mistral (overcoat on arm!) disfigures the little Place du Forum, and when I called on the poet at Maillane, I noticed a small replica of it on his mantelpiece. Looking rather like a shorter Colonel Cody, he came to town every Tuesday to keep an eye on the *Musée Arleten*. Watching the bull-game in the *Arènes* one day I noticed that no two of the arches forming the crown of this smaller Coliseum were exactly equal but were drawn as it were 'free-hand', resulting in a 'living' quality, which geometrical exactitude could never achieve.

I found myself a good *gîte* on the Boulevard des Lices. The Gelet family passed their waking hours in the restaurant. I have always admired this faculty of the French of living in public. Would it be due to this that no quarrels were ever seen to take

place, no crockery was hurled, no recriminations indulged in: The younger members of the family showed no sign of being on other than affectionate terms with each other, their parents and even their grandparents. The last had resigned themselves without any sign of regret or struggle to an amiable, dignified and knowledgeable inactivity. Still fully conscious of the interests, exigencies and difficulties of mundane existence, especially as these affected the family, they seemed while contemplating them with equanimity to envisage the prospect of the grave, too, without misgiving.

Monsieur Gelet, though no great æsthetician, perhaps, for he recommended a recently burnt-out house as a suitable subject for my brush, was an honest fellow and fed me well and cheaply. There are many such in France, and you only have to be poor and of goodwill to discover them.

Aux Martigues d'Azur vous allez cueillir  
La Flore des Étangs,  
Pour faire la Couronne, amis, qui me decore,  
Et me garde du Temps.

JEAN MOREAS

Leaving Arles for Marseilles, the railway skirts the northern shores of the vast Étang de Berre. In the far distance appeared the shores of a town sitting as it seemed in the water. Feeling I had found what I was after I returned from Marseilles and at Pas des Anciens changed to the little railway line which leads to Martigues. My premonition proved to be right. There was no need to seek further. Martigues is divided by canals into a series of quarters. These canals join to form the estuary of the Caronte, which connects the Étang with the Mediterranean at Port du Duc. The old houses, of an incredible picturesqueness, rose from the narrow quays, providing numerous artists with ideal motives. They squatted in rows at the *Coin des Peintres*, vying with each other in the abuse of cadmium and the palette knife. Feeling shy of joining in this mass effort I avoided their company, though I admired the subjects which occupied them. The buildings, however, appeared to my eye to be not bright yellow but rather an exquisite pearl grey and rose.

I could never paint in a crowd. Sometimes even the presence of a model is too much for me. To be wholly absorbed in the

object before one, it is necessary to become, as it were, identified with it, and accidents of personality, place or time, may intervene to make this feat more difficult or quite impossible. The path of self-abandonment which leads to realization is strewn with obstructions which the artist, like the mystic, the saint or the voluptuary, must set aside or overcome before he can attain to the ecstasy which transcends consciousness or the beauty which eludes measurement. Achievement outdistances labour by a tittle and is separated from its tears and sweat by the trembling of a leaf. Unhappy he who continues to flog the horse whose spirit has already been released! Though I hung about the streets and quays of Martigues, admiring the fishermen who, like me, inactive, lounged by the canals in contemplation and check-topped sea boots, while I projected pictures which never materialized; it was in the country near that I got to work at last after months of indecision. With my own family for models and the Étang de Berre and the pines, tamarisk, almond and olive trees on its shores for a setting, I found the detachment and the freedom I needed to discover, by experiment, a method of dealing with the things I thought to be within, or partly within, my reach. The Villa Ste Anne, situated upon a cliff rising steeply from the water, commanded a magnificent view of the lagoon and *toutes les Martigues*. From its terrace rose a noble group of pines. Away to the north-east the blue prow of the Montagne de Saint Victoire reared itself above the highlands beyond Rognac. Our proprietor, Monsieur Bazin, a tall, hawk-faced Huguenot, was an early pioneer of aviation. A pupil of Mouillard (author of *Le vol sans Battement* and *L'Empire de l'Air*), he had made his own essays in gliding flight and his latest apparatus still mouldered in its hangar. Undaunted by failure he cherished further projects, and these once brought to fruition, would have had me to be his 'jockey', for he himself was old. Showing none of the suspicion or avarice of the French *rentier*, to which our travels had accustomed us, he made no difficulty about letting the smaller portion of the villa, with its pleasant garden on the road side. Sometimes he would invite us into his own quarters and while treating us to excellent *vin rosé* read aloud with gusto from Daudet's *Lettres de mon Moulin*. Before his hearth, the lion skin, a trophy he had brought back from Africa, reminded us that we were in the land of Tartarin of Tarascon. In those days Martigues



breathed an air of innocence which now the partial industrialization of the region has somewhat marred. To be sure there are more cafés opened on the Cours de la République and more motor-cars parked under its plane-trees, but there is less gaiety and good humour; even the utility of the new digue has been doubted, though its ugliness is beyond dispute! There is no longer any dancing at the Café de la Commerce, and the modern bascule bridge, though serving its purpose, leaves me, at least, æsthetically moved. But before these signs of progress had appeared, we visited the place repeatedly. My family, reinforced by two comparable daughters, now occupied the larger portion of the villa, for Bazin had died. On Sunday evenings it was our custom to frequent the *Cercle Cupidon*, to which the two girls, as if under some magical spell, were irresistibly drawn. Here they danced endlessly while I sat with my *marc-cassis* and surveyed the scene from a corner. The local youths and maidens always behaved with that correctitude combined with cheerfulness which appears to be a secret in the possession only of Royalty and the lower middle classes. The music, provided by voluntary effort, made up for the unambustiousness what it lacked in virtuosity.

During frequent visits to Marseilles in the earlier days I used to be in the habit of resorting to the *Place d'Aix*. Seated on the marble terrace of the Bar Auzas, I could watch the goings and comings of the Spanish Gypsies, of whom there was at that time a considerable colony in this neighbourhood. Beneath the triumphal arch opposite, the *Tondeurs de Chiens* lounged and lay, being nearly always engaged, when not asleep, in constant argument. Their wives or sisters, in couples, crossed the terrace, looking, as I remarked at the time, like 'nuns of some well-known and brilliant order'. It was here too that I encountered another detachment of the Gypsy coppersmiths, whom first I discovered at Cherbourg. With some knowledge of their dialect and, like them, a beard, top-boots and ear-rings, they regarded me as one of themselves, or at least sufficiently akin, that I profited by their hospitality for a week or two till they dispersed.

In Italy, later on, I met more of the tribe, and among them, strikingly, some of my friends of Cherbourg of two years before. These 'Gypsy Barons', as they might well be called, would gather up and reassemble in a manner which would have seemed

highly mysterious, did I not know, that while despising the civilization upon which they battered, they were not above making use of its mechanical amenities and employed some contemptible but literate outsider to do their telegraphing.

An anthropologist would be interested by an incident which took place when a band of Turkish Gypsies arrived and disposed of their encampment of little black horsehair tents on a piece of waste land near us. I was just beginning to draw one of the women, when murmuring '*O Del dias man mro mui*' (God gave me my face), she hastily veiled herself, and I was unable to convince her that my intentions were innocent of any sinister or magical implication. When taking coffee with these people I was taught the proper method to practise. A lump of sugar was held between the teeth and the coffee poured through.

The *Vieux Port*, as everybody knows, is the ancient gateway and exit of Marseilles, and is arrived at from land via the *Cannetière*, the main artery of the city, which debouches upon the centre of the quays. On the left or eastern side, apart from the business of the sea, that of gastronomy prevails. Restaurants rub shoulders and popular booths are piled with every possible variety of shellfish upon which the Marseillais dote. On the western side lies the *Quartier des Femmes*. This consists of a complex of narrow streets where the old houses, which appear to reek of corruption, are tenanted for the most part by prostitutes. Some incarcerated in brothels are invisible to the passer-by; others, so to speak, free lances, stand or sit before the open door of their poor dens, in an advanced stage of *déshabillé*, proffering their charms, or rather imposing them on such bemused sailors who, having set foot on shore with a pocketful of pay, might be seeking to gratify at once their spiritual longings and physiological needs. With a varied choice before him, the sailor's idealism plus a necessary sense of economy, seemed usually, as far as I could judge, to move him to a decision in favour of sheer bulk rather than those qualities which belong to a stricter æsthetic tradition, and which to arrive at would no doubt entail greater research with the additional embarrassment of mental effort and further outlay. Apart from the tastes of such simpletons as were discharged from the ships or had wandered in from the country, the presence in these purlieus of crudely painted youths, scarcely distinguishable from their female

leagues, showed that the requirements of a more exacting type amateur were also catered for. '*Est-ce une Dame ou un Pierrot?*' claimed a young woman, as she eyed my companion, an impeccable English lady, who had unwisely insisted on my inducing her through the nefarious quarter. 'How goes it?' I quired of a middle-aged odalisque, who sat knitting before her stove. '*Ça va doucement, Monsieur, mais le travail est dur.*' As for the regular *bordels*, these establishments belonging to the vast main system, characteristic of a modern industrial society, keep their employ a movable stock-in-trade (the movement being always downward), never to be seen outside the business-premises. Permanently in debt to the *Patronne*, the enslaved females are only liberated when no longer able to earn dividends for the shareholders or bread for themselves. It is claimed in justification of this trade that by it the virtue of the respectable class of French manhood is assured. . . . But let us leave this infected area and return to Martigues.

Across the road stood the dilapidated hermitage of Ste Anne, and a little further off the Café de la Gaité displayed its discreet facon amidst the little olive trees whose grey foliage shone softly like velvet. A gypsy appearing one day with a herd of Algerian donkeys, I bought one and a small cart. Thus we increased our mobility and were enabled to explore the neighbourhood, children and all. The donkey was a good animal though small, and required help up the hills, but on the flat there was no holding him. Philip and Lady Ottoline Morrell, who were visiting Aix, proposed that we should forgather at the capital. It was a long march, but Dorelia, the donkey and I accomplished it in a day. On arriving we found some difficulty in getting a pull in. Our appearance, it seemed, was not reassuring. Eventually, the modest *Cherval Blanc* admitted us and there we were made to feel quite at home. With the Morrells we visited Cézanne's house, the Jas du Bouffan, which still contained some of his pictures, including the murals of the four seasons, and, inexplicably, *Ingres*; the Bibliothèque Méjane (Monsieur Méjane, the director, paid us every consideration) and the other sights of the city.

After some time spent in reflection and experiment I got busy and did a number of small panels which I think mark a definite stage of progress. In the marvellous light of Provence I woke



up to colour. These panels, painted out of doors and mostly in one sitting, usually depict members of my family in a landscape setting. I preferred those rare days when the light diffused by an atmospheric veil enveloped the object without casting shadows. Falling in with some Spanish gypsies at Marseilles, I had some of them over to stay with us and painted two of the young women, La Paca and Dolores. In the evening two of their fellows would alternately sing *coplas* to the guitar while gazing, as if hypnotized, into each other's eyes.

Though I greeted the appearance of painters in the town without enthusiasm, it was a different matter when two literary friends, T. W. Earp and Roy Campbell, arrived on the scene. The former accompanied me back to England on a memorable occasion, exhibiting a useful sense of direction, an unfailing tact and a trustworthy flair for the best restaurants on the way. Roy established himself for some years near Ferrières, the further quarter of Martigues, occupying himself solely with water-jousting, fishing, cow-baiting and poetry. Though never stirring from the district he seemed always to keep in spiritual touch with Bloomsbury. P. Wyndham Lewis paid him a visit once, spending a few hours in secret session, after which, heavily disguised, he caught the first train back to Paris. Horace Cole, too, came down one winter. He had no great success in Martigues and was eventually persuaded by the Gendarmerie to leave the town. Gendarmes are even less accessible than other Frenchmen to the appeal of 'practical jokes', particularly when accompanied as they usually are, by atrocious ill-manners. E. J. Moeran, the musician, spent some time with us. He seemed to think he was collecting folk-songs, but all he got hold of was a defective piano upon which to record them. J. D. Innes, returning from Collioure, joined us, and we stayed together at St. Chamas. This is the place on the north side of the Étang de Berre which had formerly caught Renoir's eye. It had attracted me too, for D. and I had already passed a season there. Innes was too ill to work and soon returned to England. He and I had lived and worked together in North Wales. I had found him at Arenig, near Bala, at the Inn of Rhyd-y-fen, and we later took a lonely cottage at Nant-ddu upon the slopes of Migneint. At this time Innes' activity was astonishing. He would be out all day, running goat-like up and down the mountains, and generally returned with two or three panels

completed. Perhaps he was moved as one *prédestiné*, to these last heroic exertions. His feeling for these mountains, and chief of all Arenig, was more than romantic: it was religious.

Horace Cole, who was a good friend to Innes, visited him with me from time to time at Brighton during his final illness. The War had begun, but it didn't interest Dick, nor, I think, did we. Only the last time, when Euphemia came with us—he was then indeed interested—but died shortly after.

And now to go back to London. I was beginning to be seriously incommoded by the attentions of Mde Strindberg. His 'admirable woman', as Lewis had been careful to call her, had developed into something worse than an amiable nuisance. Her zeal for my welfare and advantage (which she had taken upon herself to promote) was such as to endanger my peace of mind and threaten the foundations of my being as an independent and freedom-loving individual. Her monstrous egotism, lust for power, and demoniacal energy, were proof against every rebuff, nay, every gesture of delicacy and consideration I was capable of. My friends, too, involved, willy-nilly, in this duel, shared my antipathy and to a lesser extent my peril. With no means of defence on my command but flight, even this ignominious resource was restricted by the nature of my occupations, and though I might hide myself in the most obscure retreat, Strindberg's 'pretty little jailor', as he had called her, gifted apparently with the power of clairvoyance coupled with second-sight, was bound sooner or later to discover me. Though the pretty little jailor failed to get me locked up, her ill-success might be due to the fact that the qualifying adjective had ceased in my time to be exact. Bernard Shaw once told me that he was 'physically a poltroon, but morally a hero'. I have never been sure where to draw the line between the two categories, but I know that the sight of Mde Strindberg, staring down on me in an open taxi-cab, a glad and calculated smile of greeting illuminating her face, shaded but not entirely excluded by what, I suppose, would once have been considered a stylish hat, its brim turned up behind and crowned with a splendid outcrop of sweet peas; this sight, I say, turned my bones to water. I have elsewhere remarked that 'perfect beauty intimidates'; but not often, I think, to this extent. If I was sensible to the appeal of the mistress, her maid, on the contrary, stimulated my interest perceptibly. Anushka was a Croat.

Though the only one I have met, I should judge her to be an uncommonly fine specimen of her race. Mde Strindberg was not blind to my feelings (which, besides, I took no trouble to conceal) and attempted, with her usual bad psychology, to profit by them in the following way. I had escaped to Paris and, lodged in an unaccustomed hotel, was enjoying to the full a spell of peaceful recuperation after the agitations of London, when one day who should appear at my abode but Anushka; and an Anushka transfigured! Richly robed in black velvet with a becoming hat to match, her person, already so well endowed by nature, had acquired a new and formidable stamp of elegance. Without inquiring how she had discovered my hiding-place, I invited her to lunch. The time passed pleasantly. Anushka was in her most amiable mood. At last she revealed the object of her visit. *Madame* was very ill. She had attempted to 'commit suicide', and implored me to come back to hear her last words; to see her (or be seen) for the last time. . . . I was unimpressed by this news. *Madame* frequently 'committed suicide', but as often recovered. For a woman of her constitution no amount of veronal had any lethal effect: it merely upset her stomach for a week or two. I pointed this out to Anushka and argued that it would be far preferable now that we were together, to depart at once for the Pyrenees—a country I was curious to know, and which I was sure would interest her as much as it did me. Loyal to her mistress, however, the noble girl insisted on our returning to London by the night train. But once this duty fulfilled we would be free to go anywhere I liked, and, she added in French: 'Vous n'aurez rien à regretter.' Seeing that she was determined to carry out her instructions, I gave in at last, though unwillingly, and agreed to meet her at the Gare du Nord, for the boat train that evening.

I did not keep this appointment. The trap was too obvious. In payment for their gross underestimate of my intelligence, I failed both mistress and maid and prolonged my Parisian interlude. I saw no more of Anushka. Furnished with a modest *dot*, she married, was taken to America and put to work on the streets. She would, I think, have done better in the Pyrenees. But those fine Slavonic eyes shone with little but the inadequate cunning of the peasant and had mistaken my frankness for stupidity. A little saddened but not disillusioned I went my way. The qualities I had recognized and applauded, however accompanied, were authentic



I had not been deceived. I have never joined the cynics in a philosophy of impotence or frustration nor relished the unctuous smacking of the Hedonist either; yet, I have no patience with the poets who pipe too wistfully of love or harp on passion as though it lay behind, beyond or beneath them and they were at grips with it. For the lover no such detachment is possible; what tranquillity can he enjoy who grapples with a winged siren on the edge of an abyss? Spellbound, but not under the enchantments of memory or dream, he triumphs as he is overcome by the smile of one whose beauty, though divine, is sensitive and whose beneficence, like a Queen's, may burn its light away. That which, yesterday, shone as a star, today is dead, and the loveliest flower, its supreme moment passed, disintegrates before our eyes. Love is a vagrant and when we revisit its haunts, we find the Gypsies gone and nothing left of them but a few rags and the black circles of their fires.

## SELECTED NOTICE

*Posthumous John Drawings*. Edited by Lilian Browne. Faber & Faber, 12s. 6d.  
 An established tradition in the literature of British Art that a painter must be dead and buried (if possible for a century or more) before anything so memorialized as a book devoted to his drawings can be produced. The appearance of this volume at a moment in our history, which is almost exclusively devoted to pleasant surprises, may therefore cause some alarm and anxiety amongst Mr. John's admirers. Happily Mr. John is not dead, this volume is no memorial, an elaborated obituary notice dependent for its sales on the novelty of his decease. Mr. John is very much alive, alarmingly so at times, and the fact that such a publication has been possible, in his lifetime and in wartime, is a tribute to public taste but to the compelling attractions of his genius.  
 In his admirable 'Note on Drawing' Mr. John begins his final paragraph by saying that in England we have Rowlandson to boast of, and it would be comforting to think that I, too, may be allowed some part in this great inheritance of English Art.  
 Let us consider for an instant (with the certainty of disagreement) the use of Line by the great Masters. Raphael and Ingres are the two great masters of Line. They explored its possibilities and perfected its subtleties. It was their ultimate means of expression. Michelangelo and Leonardo relied on dynamic conceptions, and used Line as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. Consider the drawing of a torso by Ingres and one by Michelangelo. With Ingres the line of the contour flows as smoothly, as surely, yet as inevitably, as the movement of a wave, with Michelangelo the line is firm and fixed, almost tearing the paper in its conviction, carved in stone, and when it does not respond to the exact nuance of his intention,

hewn again a second and a third time if necessary. With Ingres it is the beauty of Line, with Michelangelo the grandeur of conception which triumphs, though each shares in a rich measure of the other's gift.

Taking Raphael and Ingres as the greatest exponents of Line, let us apply the standard of their achievement to this country. The picture is a sad one. In spite of the excellent traditions of British Art, starting with Hilliard and covering a long string of reasonably exciting names, there is clearly no great Master of Line. Someone, departing from the whole trend of this argument, is certain to mention Gainsborough. His drawings are amongst the loveliest creations of this country, but he used the pencil as he used the brush to convey with a magical flourish the range of his poetic fancies. Someone may be tempted to mention Holbein, unfortunately as a foreigner he is inadmissible. Mr. John has introduced the name of Rowlandson as an English exponent of Line. The full-blooded vitality of his Line changing with his varying moods to a Line of the most delicate sensibility has justly placed his works amongst the first linear drawings of this country. But to talk of him in the same breath as Raphael and Ingres, which Mr. John does not do, is to descend to bathos, to invoke the croaking of frogs in the Greek play.

England has produced one man whose drawings can be mentioned in conjunction with those of Raphael and Ingres without fear or ridicule, and that is Mr. John himself. He is the one outstanding Master of Line that this country has yet produced. Such is the diversity of his talents, so varied and subtle his reactions, and so catholic the influences which he has absorbed, that any interpretation of his genius, any detailed analysis of his work, presents a problem, compared with which the description of the myriad pinks of a topaz becomes simplicity itself. But just as the label pink provides a rough, if inaccurate, guide to the colour of the topaz, so Line, perfected to the very limits of human achievement, is the quality which is common to every drawing of Mr. John, and which transmutes with a Midas touch every page from his pencil into a work of enchantment.

The present volume offers sixty-four such pages for our delight, sixty-four precious moments amidst the pains and platitudes of war and for a sum within the range of many purses. The enthusiasm and industry of Miss Lilian Browse, the good sense and foresight of Messrs. Faber, have made this publication possible. Mr. John's short 'Note on Drawing' provides a stimulating theme which cannot be argued here and offers further proof of his exceptional gift as a writer, which 'The Fragments of an Autobiography', published in *Horizon*, have already demonstrated. Mr. T. W. Earp's axiomatic Foreword contains a keener appreciation of Mr. John and more wisdom in two pages than most critics could compress into twenty. Enough of noseays.

Our debt to those who in wartime have overcome innumerable difficulties and presented us with so startling a delectation must snuff our criticism to a minimum. This volume is in a sense an illustrated complement to the Exhibition of Mr. John's drawings held at the National Gallery.

The selection is on the whole admirable, and shows us the main trend of Mr. John's achievement, covering a long period in time, considerable variety in technique and a number of different styles. The drawings can be divided into three main groups, Portraits, Studies, and Compositions.

The Portraits stretch over forty-six years, starting with Arthur Roberts, drawn in 1895 and ending with Thomas Lowinsky drawn this year. His rendering of Arthur Roberts (1) is an astounding performance for a boy of seven. The modelling is elaborate, but into the worldly humorous eyes, the prominent fleshy nose, the florid twisted lips, he has wrought the spirit of the eternal Punchinello. In contrast turn to the head of James Joyce (55). Equally complete and executed in a few lines, it is a brilliant portrait of an intellectual. In the drawings of Yeats, the technique of Watteau is felt, particularly in the emphasis of the pencil, in the use of broken line and dark accents, but the fineness, the beauty of a mood caught in all its mystery, belong exclusively to him.

At least twelve of the studies in this book are of Dorelia (Mrs. Augustus John), and her haunting loveliness has inspired some of the finest works of Mr. John's pencil. She has been one of the principal mediums through which he has expressed that intensely personal vision of feminine beauty. His women have no place in time. They belong to a remote world of his own creation which leaves us wondering from afar. Their gestures and the fall of their garments are imbued with a grandeur which does not prevent them from portraying every facet of feminine wilfulness.

The drawing of 'Dorelia in a Fur Cap' (20) is a typical example. A witching creature passing through her lovely fingers perhaps a strand of hair with which to ensnare some happy mortal.

The 'Full length Study of Dorelia' (19) is a masterpiece of poise and quiet restraint. 'Dorelia Standing' (17) is a poem of languor in which the drawing of the skirt demonstrates how the richness of the imagination interprets the apparent dullness of reality. 'Woman Seated with her Child' (28) is again Dorelia, a monumental study of bold design. 'Dorelia holding up her Skirt' (33) is a fine example of a spiritual type which Mr. John has created and which may be in some measure the outcome of his admiration for the gypsies. Proud and aloof, with a natural splendour, aloof, sulky and at times suspicious, with the hardness of *Wuthering Heights*, they live in a spiritual isolation, indifferent, mocking, despising those whose lives are regulated by anything but the laws of nature. Very different is the enchanting drawing of Miss Gwen John (39), one of the most subtle and sensitive artists of this century. She stands slightly turned from the spectator, a somewhat shy and diffident figure, and giving us the feeling that she is anxious to be off. It is a portrait very delicately rendered and there are touches of wit in the severity of her hair, the angle of the hat, and in the squareness of the coat.

Perhaps the loveliest of all the studies is the 'Head of Dorelia' (41). It is an appeal to the senses, a symphony of flowing curves, soft contours and dreamy sensuality; and to add to this intoxication, the right eye, raised by the pressure of the hand, has been given a more exotic and less rounded shape, a jewelled detail breaking only to quicken the harmony of the rhythm.

'Study of the Artist's Son: Caspar' (47) typifies Mr. John's understanding of children. He draws them without frills, stripped of Faunteroyisms, unspoiled of artificial manners, unselfconsciousness, untidy and intrepid. In the 'Little Family' (11) the treatment is more tender and less austere. The smaller child clinging to the clouds is intently observed by its mother, while the second child,

more interested in Mr. John than in the beauties of nature, clings for safety to its mother's skirt.

The compositions include two very fine pen and wash drawings of 'Fisher Girls at Equihen' (22 and 25), and very wisely these are accompanied by a series of pencil studies of the individual subjects. By studying these drawings together it is possible to gain some idea of the method and of the unremitting labour which Mr. John has devoted to the perfection of his Art. Just as the drawings of Ingres at Montauban prove that he sometimes made several hundred studies before embarking on a picture, so in the work of Mr. John will be found the same untiring experiment and passionate zeal.

The drawings have been arranged in chronological sequence. No mention is to be found as to the date of Mr. John's birth, 1878. This is an irritating omission as it is obviously of interest and importance to know at what age the first drawing reproduced was done. This mistake can certainly not be attributed to any sudden bashfulness on the part of Mr. John. The problem of arrangement cannot have been an easy one. Comparatively few of the drawings are dated. On the other hand, the dates of the drawings of Yeats, Euphemia, Alick Schepler, Madame Suggia, could surely have been ascertained with accuracy and recorded. Again, the existence and whereabouts of drawings bearing a relation to those reproduced should have been carefully listed, not vaguely stated. Much additional information might, it is felt, have been included in the 'Notes'. It must always be borne in mind that hard facts, easily obtained in the present, may save posterity much dull research. The Index of Plates is unsatisfactory, being arranged alphabetically by the first word of each title. This has resulted in some strange juxtapositions but is otherwise valueless. The titles are straightforward and self-explanatory, but we would suggest that 'Les Aveugles' (60) be renamed 'Pre-War British Cabinet in Procession'.

All this is incidental; war is no time for catalogues, cross references and dates. These pages of beauty are an antidote to bombs. The book is a bargain: buy it.

BRINSLEY FORD

## LETTERS—(I) WAR BOOKS

Sir,

FOR more than two years Mr. Tom Harrison has read 'literally every book which has anything to do with the war'. In the article on war books which he contributed to the December *Horizon* there is, naturally enough, a dyspeptic tone. I am not concerned to challenge his sociological findings or literary taste. But I do challenge his right to utter, on inadequate and therefore misleading evidence, an irresponsible condemnation of publishers as a whole. 'Publishers', he writes, 'are moaning about paper supplies for books, claiming privileges on the grounds of keeping culture alive. If the stuff that fills my bookshelves is democratic culture, then the Paper Control has been more than kind. I would estimate that 80 per cent of the paper used in publishing books now is devoted to books which even the publishers themselves regard as nothing but money-making.'



In an authoritative article in the December number of *Life and Letters Today*, Mr. Stanley Unwin states that, at a conservative estimate, 'two-thirds of the total image of paper used for books goes in reprints', and that 90 per cent of these reprints are books of reference, technical books, scholastic, educational and standard works and classics. Even so, it is a notable and deplorable truth that out of the 970 titles in the *Everyman Library* more than 500 are already out of print. Thus no more than one-third of the paper now available for publishing is used for the production of new books. Is Mr. Harrison's evidence conclusive enough to justify his damaging conclusions even in regard to this third? Is the stuff that fills his bookshelves' fairly representative of democratic culture? The answer is that it is not, and only Mr. Harrison implied that it was. On his own showing he has confined his reading to war books. He does not attempt to estimate the percentage of war books as against non-war books published since September 1939. This latter class includes, besides many novels and much poetry, political science, philosophy, history, literary criticism, essays, and, of course, technical and educational works and reference books. Few laymen realize how relatively small is the volume of topical literature and fiction compared with that of essential technical and, above all, educational works. Mr. Harrison will be better able to judge democratic culture when he has studied it in *all* the many sections of literature.

In present circumstances each publishing house receives a percentage—rather than a third—of its peacetime consumption of paper. The percentage is assessed on the last year of peacetime conditions, a period at which consumption was in any case very much below the average. The Government has decided on this impartial policy in preference to one of discrimination between publishing firms based on the supposed value of their several productions. Wartime publications, therefore, necessarily reproduce on a diminished scale the peacetime unevenness in the standard and type of books. While we may regret this, it is hard to see how the system could be modified except by the sort of Government interference which, however benevolently intended, must always impinge on the essential liberties of writer and publisher alike.

Mr. Harrison also complains of the cowardice of publishers in wartime. 'Less than ever', he writes, 'have they taken a chance with new authors.' If he counted the number of new writers represented in the catalogues of, say, Messrs. Faber or Cape, to mention only two firms, since September 1939, he might find some evidence in favour of revising that statement. Not that there is merit in the mere fact of encouraging a new writer unless he or she be a good one.

Finally Mr. Harrison declares that 'we need some more wartime courage among publishers, some more encouragement from all sides for the young writers . . . we need now some of the intellectual leadership which sensitive writing and sensitive thinking can give.' Few people would deny the strength of this latter plea, but has it any logical connection with the supposed lack of wartime courage among publishers? The publisher is, after all, only a species of manufacturer: he can make nothing unless the writers supply him with his raw material. While it is evident that many second- and third-rate books, which might have found a publisher in peacetime, are today returning in forlorn appeals to disappointed authors, no work of first-class importance will fail

ultimately to secure its share of the paper ration. Publishers have fought hard to maintain their difficult position in this war-driven country. It is for the writers to justify that fight.

C. V. WEDGWOOD

Dear Sir,

## II

I was delighted that you should have received 'Combatant's' letter. The O.C.T.U. controversy would not have been complete without a statement of the reactionary view, held by many officers of lower field rank.

The interesting thing about the controversy is the agreement on symptom and the argument about diagnosis. We are all certain that something is wrong with the emergency officers and gentlemen who are commanding the lower formations of the Army. But we dispute the remedy.

In peacetime, officers were drawn from a class inheriting or usurping the feudal tradition. A minority of these were men of serious ability. But even those who chose the Army because they preferred an easy, open-air life with a limited financial security had preserved intact through Public School and Sandhurst a confidence and sense of superiority, which is the psychological basis of leadership.

As the Army expanded into a fighting force, more and more officers were needed. The professional pool was exhausted and the net had to be cast wider and wider. Eton, Harrow, Winchester could not cope with the demand. There were not enough gentlemen to be officers. The help of any school whose Headmaster sat at the Headmasters' Conference had to be enlisted.

These new 'potential officers' were mostly drawn from the lower-paid black-coated workers, bank clerks, commercial travellers, insurance agents. Feudal tradition meant nothing to them. Some snatched at a pip, because of the social prestige; some wanted greater comfort or slightly higher pay; others, again, believing that they had capacity for leadership, were serious in their jobs, but felt miserable in the pseudo-feudal atmosphere of the officers' mess. They are all misfits, in terms of pre-war military tradition.

At the same time, the new conscript soldier felt a misfit. The pre-war regular was usually a maladjusted person. Social, economic or sexual pressure had driven him from civilian life into the Army. The demands made on his blind obedience were as great as those on his intellect were small. The wartime soldier needed a different type of discipline. He had left a civilian job to do a military job. He resented the assumption that he was irrational, stubborn, stupid and malingering.

Over a million men were called up and submitted to this treatment before it was discovered that the treatment was wrong. But now at last it has been realized that the old lag is not the ideal fighting soldier. Physically much harder, the revised forms of physical and military training are designed to produce fighting men with resource, initiative and self-dependence. The Army Bureau of Current Affairs is based on the conception that morale depends more securely on knowledge than on blind obedience.

Great changes have taken place in the strategy, tactics and training of the British Army during the last two years. But so far there has been no official change in the conception of the officer-man relationship. Unofficially, of course, there has been a change, one which is deplored by 'Combatant'. Black-coated

kers have been unable to identify themselves with a tradition alien to them. Nobody would know better than 'Combatant' how difficult it is, with undivided will, to throw off the traditions of one class and be accepted by the class which considers itself superior. And many of these blacked workers are not undivided in will. The values and ambitions of feudalism have no meaning for them and they know that to act from a false centre of experience is to invoke ridicule.

It is a fact, therefore, that the feudal tradition cannot produce a sufficiency of officers from its own ranks or convert a sufficiency of outsiders for the duration. Though the Public Schools are being combed for volunteers (two months in a trial platoon in a Young Soldiers' Battalion and then an O.C.T.U.), there are not enough even of these boys to meet the demand, and the boys are too callow and ignorant to make first-class officers.

Mr. Churchill, in his *Berlin Diary*, attributes the high morale of the German Army to the democracy existing among all ranks rather than to the military successes achieved. The Russians, who for 'Combatant's' information are, in Mr. Churchill's words, 'our allies', have shown that military ability is not confined to an aristocracy. All who place victory higher than the retention of privilege must admit that it is time to review the officer-man relationship and discover whether this dearth of officer material is not due less to lack of talent in leadership than in the imposition of the feudal relationship on officers and men for whom that relationship is unreal.

We should consider whether too much attention has been paid to the cultural background of officers. (The story was told in Colonel Bingham's O.C.T.U. cadet, an N.C.O. from the Regular Army, who, despite an excellent performance during the course, was returned to unit at the beginning of his last year, 'because he would not be happy in the mess'. The authenticity of this story is unknown, but the currency of many stories of this type is symptomatic of uneasiness.) We should consider whether sartorial discrimination between officers and men does not do more harm than good. It gives an officer a confidence he might not otherwise possess. But it allows him to get by with a slipshod performance of his duty. We should also consider whether the qualities of an officer are not more likely to reside among those, foremen and others, who have been in charge of bodies of men than among the gentler and more humanely educated pushers of the pen.

Being concerned to preserve the unity of our society in face of the enemy, I make these suggestions only because I believe that the efficiency of military leadership could be improved thereby. I make no appeal to democracy, because I know that 'Combatant', a staunch partisan of General Franco, sets little store by it. But I beg him, in the interest of our common survival, not to view this problem solely from the point of view of an aristocratic minority, but from the point of view of the nation.

From behind the shield of anonymity, 'Combatant' accuses me of having squandered the Government's money by being trained at an O.C.T.U. and of doing a soft job. I do not believe that he knows what my job is, but I can tell him that it is harder than anything that I had to do in the Army and that Army training is of the greatest value in doing it.

Yours, etc., A. CALDER-MARSHALL



Sir,

The letters printed in *Horizon* about O.C.T.U.s have been to me rather on the point. The social side of these institutions (which was complained about so bitterly by your first correspondent) is, at this stage, so inevitable that one wonders why the writer was surprised enough to be disconcerted and demoralized by it. The general discussion on the content of the O.C.T.U.s, that is, the training policy, is difficult because they differ in quality so completely. Some are exceptionally good from this point of view, others, socially more democratic, are deplorably obsolete.

On the whole my attitude is that O.C.T.U.s are just ordinary horrors of war. They are something one must put up with for the sake of the purpose for which the war is being fought and I am fighting for.

We talked the other day about what we are fighting for, and I said I would write out some quick notes about my private hopes, expectations and demands.

I hope for, and at the same time I quite seriously expect and most adamantly demand, a new world. An iconoclastic society which is deeply and self-consciously both scientific and humane.

By a scientific world I mean one that is objective, rational, non-ethical, anti-religious: relative rather than absolute in its standards, logically based on the law of Included Middle. A society that insists on recognizing and exploiting to the utmost the objective fact that we live in a fantastically wealthy world—that the existing degree of development of productive forces guarantees that if we organized an international society, no more efficiently than a present-day suburban Woolworths' stores is administered, there would be an indefinitely increasing life of security and leisure for every single man, woman and child in the world. For the first time the majority of human beings would not spend their lives preoccupied mainly with the satisfaction of their *animal* needs and *human* history could therefore begin.

By 'humane' I mean the recognition (and this is implied in the demand for a scientific outlook) of both the human ego and its gregariousness. The new society will proclaim the human being as the fundamental ethical standard. Human beings are sweaty and idealistic, they are selfish and they long for the approval and friendship of one another. They are lazy and they like to work and to fight and construct and play chess. Human beings smell and they can produce the theory of Relativity. Leonardo da Vinci was a persecuted perver and Daniel de Foe a snob and a police spy and his Moll Flanders was a profoundly kind, sensible and generous prostitute and teaser and gold digger.

These beings in their concreteness will be the criterion of good and bad, Right and Wrong. What they like and enjoy is Good, Right, proper and admirable. What they dislike is wickedly wrong. To them the most sinful phenomenon in history will be the doctrine of Original Sin.

State worship, war worship, great blond supermen ruled and ruling from the 'intuitions' of an impotent little megalomaniac with a face like a Hollywood clown would, for our generation, make a scientifically humane world inconceivable.

Fascism must therefore be eliminated.

I feel certain that this cannot be done other than by defeating the German Army in land battles.



For me then, this is what the war is about, but it would be unscientific to suggest that there are enough people fighting against Fascism, who are conscious of the necessity for scientific humanism, to ensure that winning the war would automatically establish a brave and kind and sensible new world. But I am quite certain that there are enough people to begin to convince enough people of this necessity.

HUGH SLATER, Captain

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